Hickman
Yu
Dauterman
Asrar
Gho

Omnibus

Writer: Jonathan Hickman

**X-MEN #1-4, #7, #9-12**
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Inkers: Gerry Alanguilan
with Leinil Francis Yu (#3-4)
Color Artists: Sunny Gho
with Rain Beredo (#3)
Letterer: VC's Clayton Cowles
Cover Art: Leinil Francis Yu & Sunny Gho

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Color Artist: Marte Gracia
Letterer: VC's Clayton Cowles
Cover Art: Leinil Francis Yu & Sunny Gho

**X-MEN #6**
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Color Artist: Sunny Gho
Letterer: VC's Clayton Cowles
Cover Art: Leinil Francis Yu & Sunny Gho

**GIANT-SIZE X-MEN: JEAN GREY & EMMA FROST**
Artist: Russell Dauterman
Color Artist: Matthew Wilson
Letterer: VC's Clayton Cowles
Cover Art: Russell Dauterman
Special thanks to Grant Morrison & Frank Quitely

**X-MEN #8**
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Color Arist: Sunny Gho
Cover Art: Leinil Francis Yu & Sunny Gho

**GIANT-SIZE X-MEN: NIGHTCRAWLER**
Artist: Alan Davis
Color Artist: Carlos Lopez
Letterer: VC's Clayton Cowles
Cover Art: Alan Davis & Edgar Delgado

**GIANT-SIZE X-MEN: MAGNETO**
Artist: Ramón K. Pérez
Color Artist: David Curiel
Letterer: VC's Clayton Cowles
Cover Art: Ben Oliver

**GIANT-SIZE X-MEN: FANTOMEX**
Artist/Color Artist: Rod Reis
Letterer: VC's Ariana Maher
Cover Art: Rod Reis

**GIANT-SIZE X-MEN: STORM**
Artist: Russell Dauterman
Color Artist: Matthew Wilson
Letterer: VC's Ariana Maher
Cover Art: Russell Dauterman
& Matthew Wilson

**X-MEN #16**
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Cover Art: Leinil Francis Yu & Sunny Gho

**X-MEN #17**
Penciler: Brett Booth
Inker: Adelso Corona
Color Artist: Sunny Gho
Letterer: VC's Clayton Cowles
Cover Art: Leinil Francis Yu & Sunny Gho

**X-MEN #18-19**
Artist: Mahmud Asrar
Color Artist: Sunny Gho
Letterer: VC's Clayton Cowles
Cover Art: Leinil Francis Yu & Sunny Gho

**X-MEN #20**
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Color Artist: Sunny Gho
Letterer: VC's Clayton Cowles
Cover Art: Leinil Francis Yu & Sunny Gho

**X-MEN #21**
Artists: Nick Dragotta, Russell Dauterman, Lucas Werneck & Sara Pichelli
Color Artists: Frank Martin, Matthew Wilson, Sunny Gho & Nolan Woodard
Letterer: VC's Clayton Cowles
Cover Art: Leinil Francis Yu & Sunny Gho

X-Men created by Stan Lee & Jack Kirby

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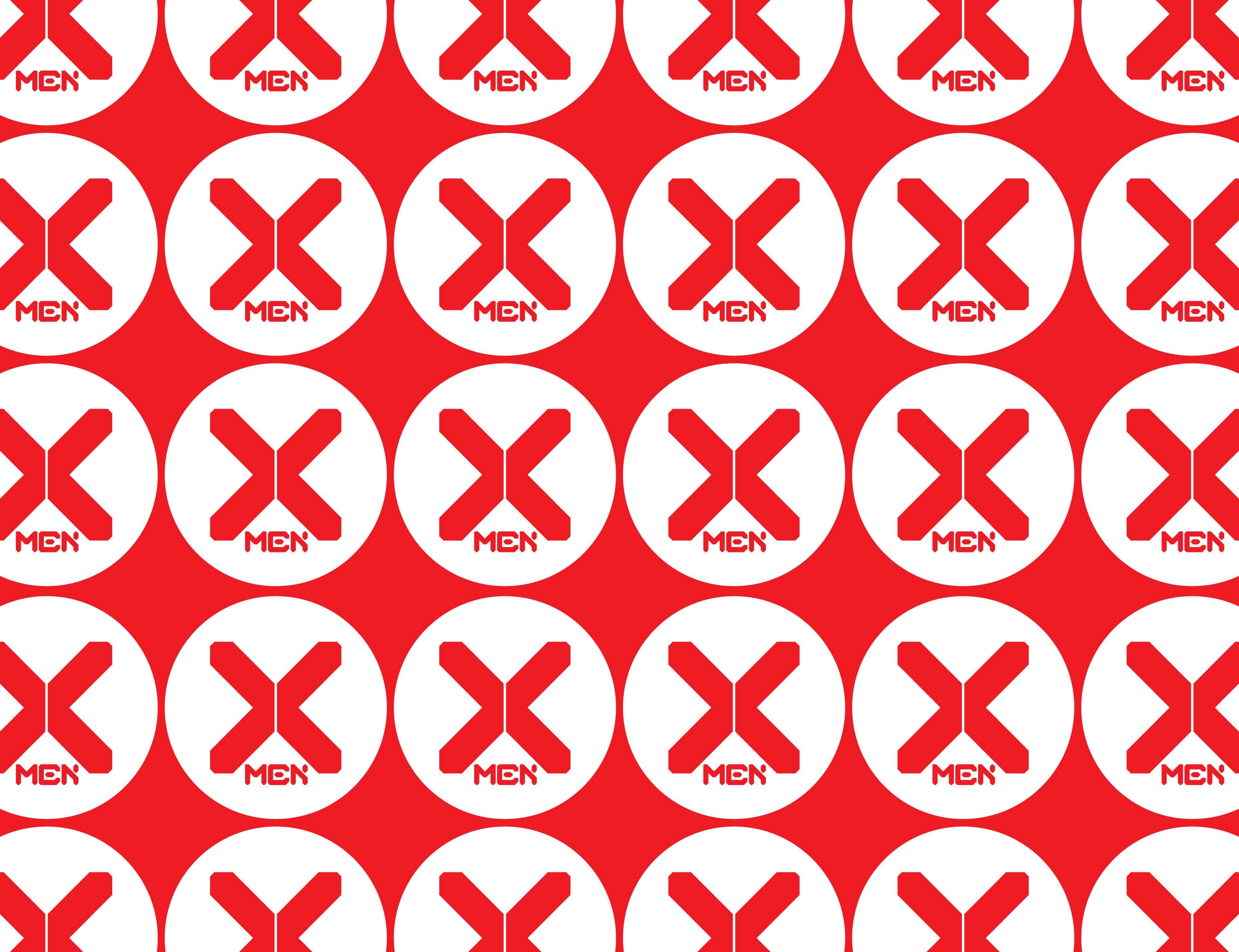
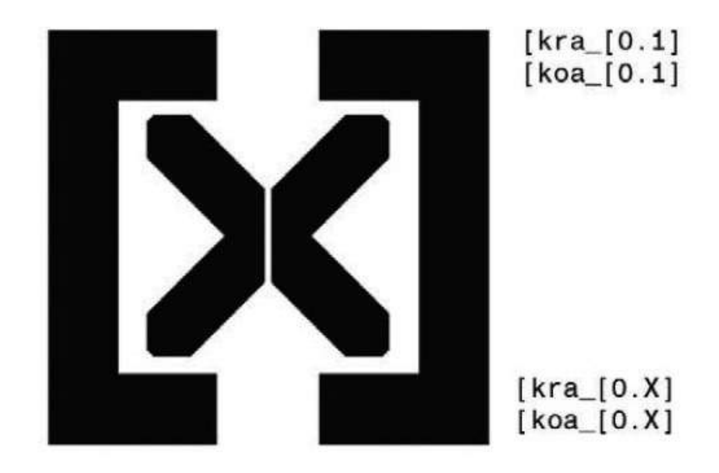

MEN

Then.
Open your eyes.
I can't, sir. I *won't.*
I'm scared of what'll happen.
I understand. You're afraid you're going to *hurt someone.*
But choosing to keep your eyes *closed because* you're *scared?*
That's what *they* do.
And you don't have to go through life blind because *you* are not like *them.*
How do you know?
Because I have no small measure of experience in those who are extraordinary.
*Now...*

Open your eyes.
They work.
The glasses work.
I can see.
Better than most, my boy...
And oh, the things I will show you.



[kra_[0.1]
[koa_[0.1]

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[koa_[0.X]

# IT'S A BRAVE NEW WORLD

Mutants around the world are flocking to the island-nation of Krakoa for safety, security and to be part of the first mutant society.

Standing between that sacred land and the human world are the heroes of mutantdom, the X-MEN.

Cyclops

Storm

Polaris

Magneto

Dr. Reyes

Jean Grey

Havok

Vulcan

Wolverine

Cable

Prestige

Corsair

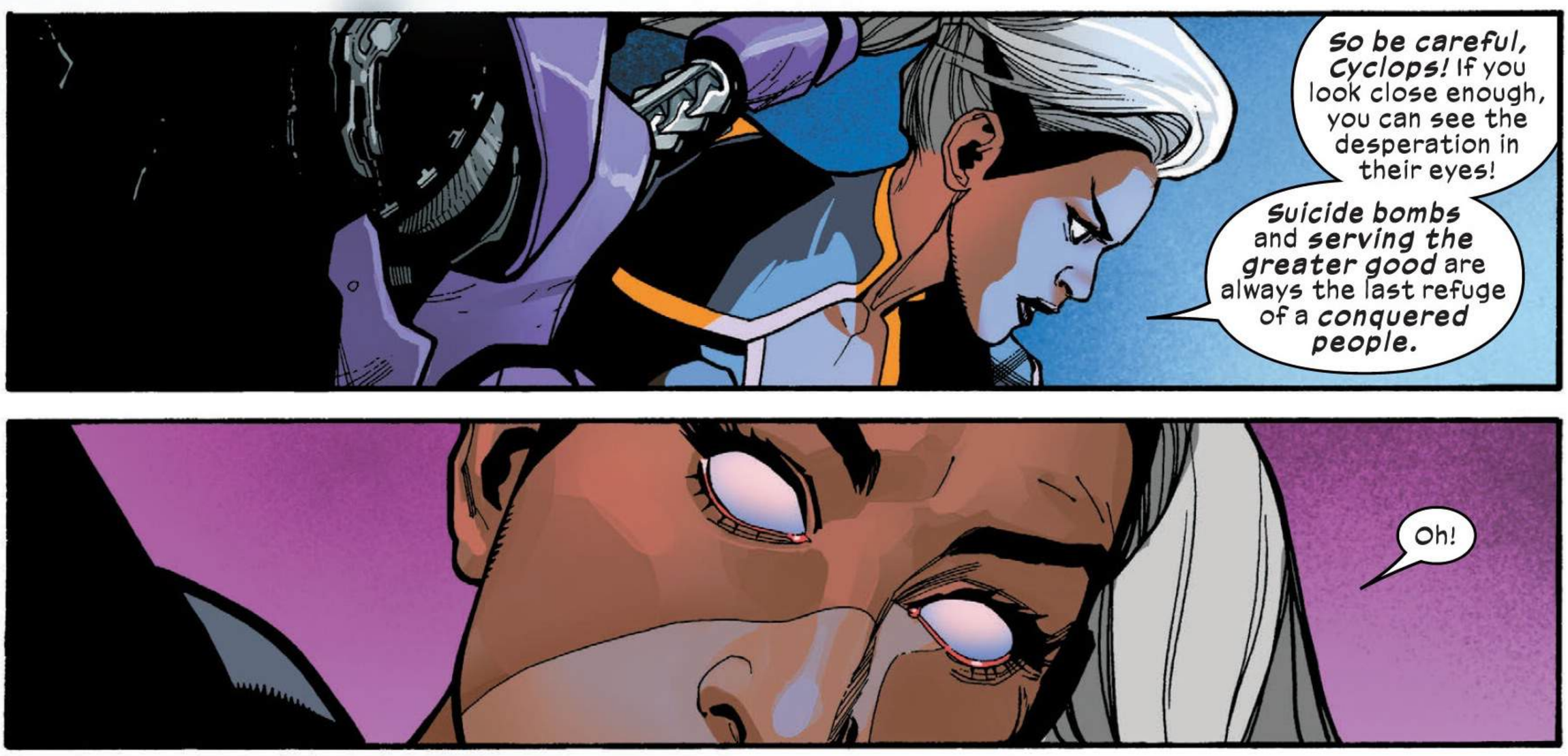
[kra_[0.1]...]
[koa_[0.1]...]

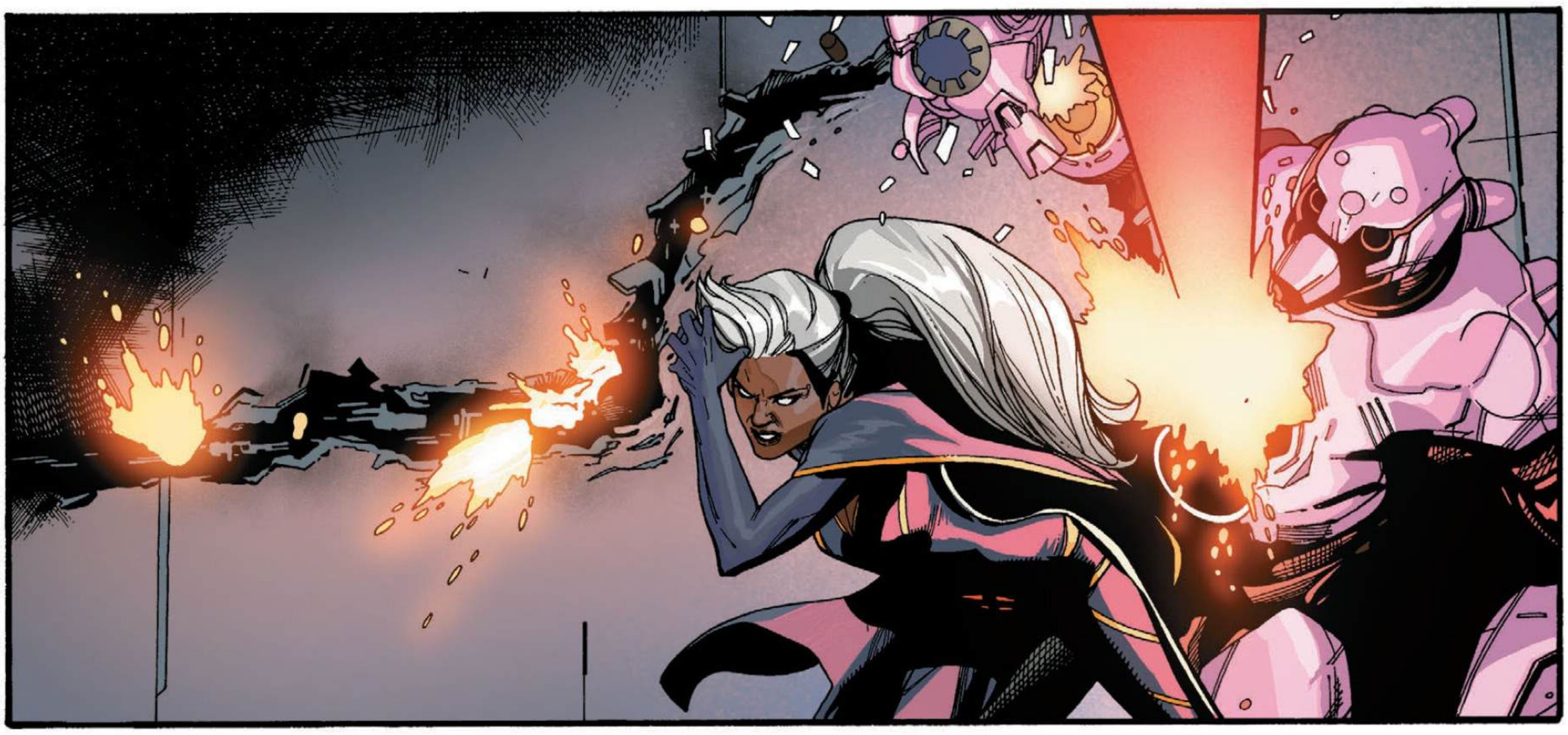
[A._New_World]

# Pax Krakoa

1

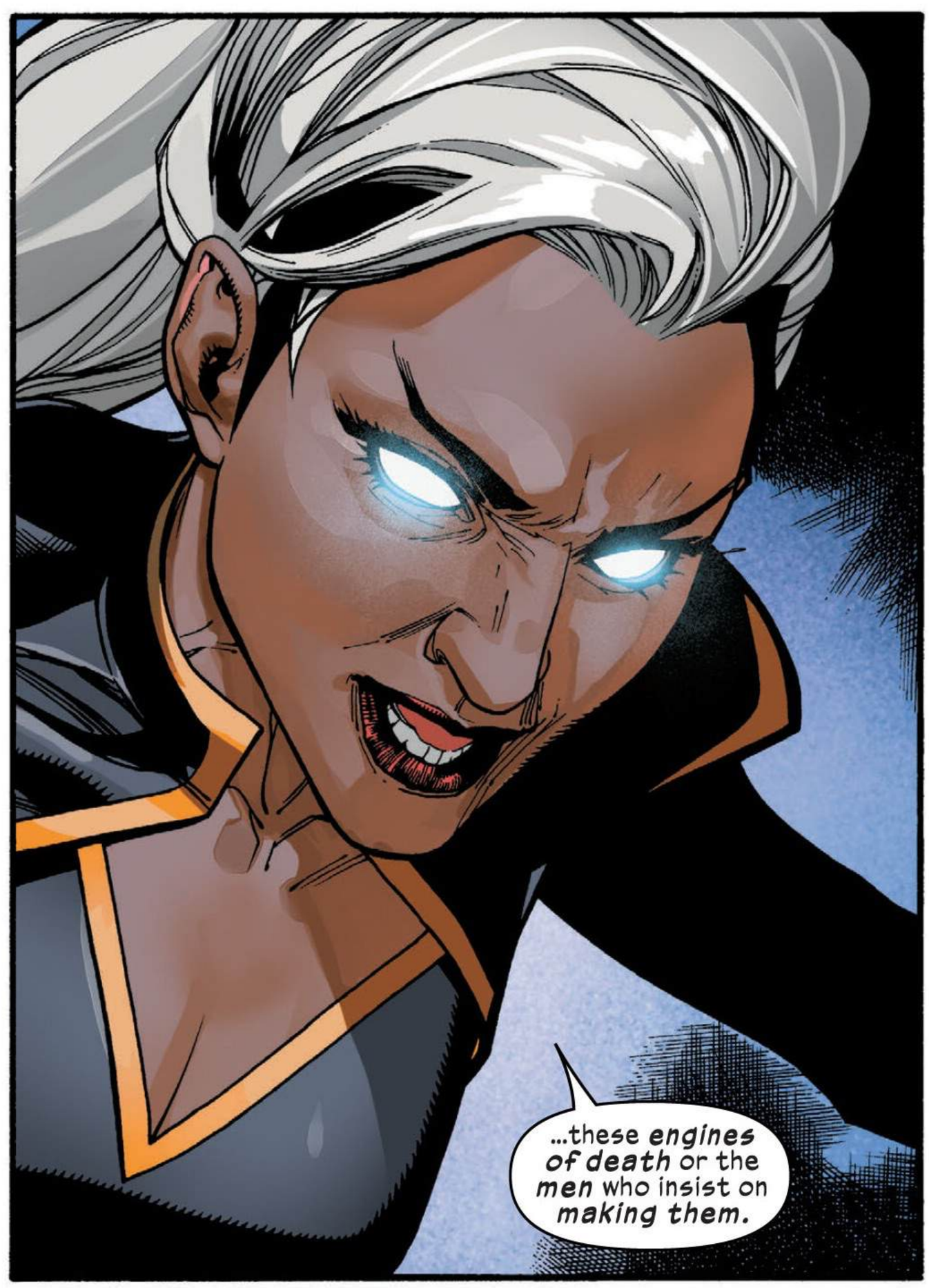
NOW.
They thought they could hide from us, but they were *wrong.*
We've reached the heart of the last Orchis stronghold on Earth!

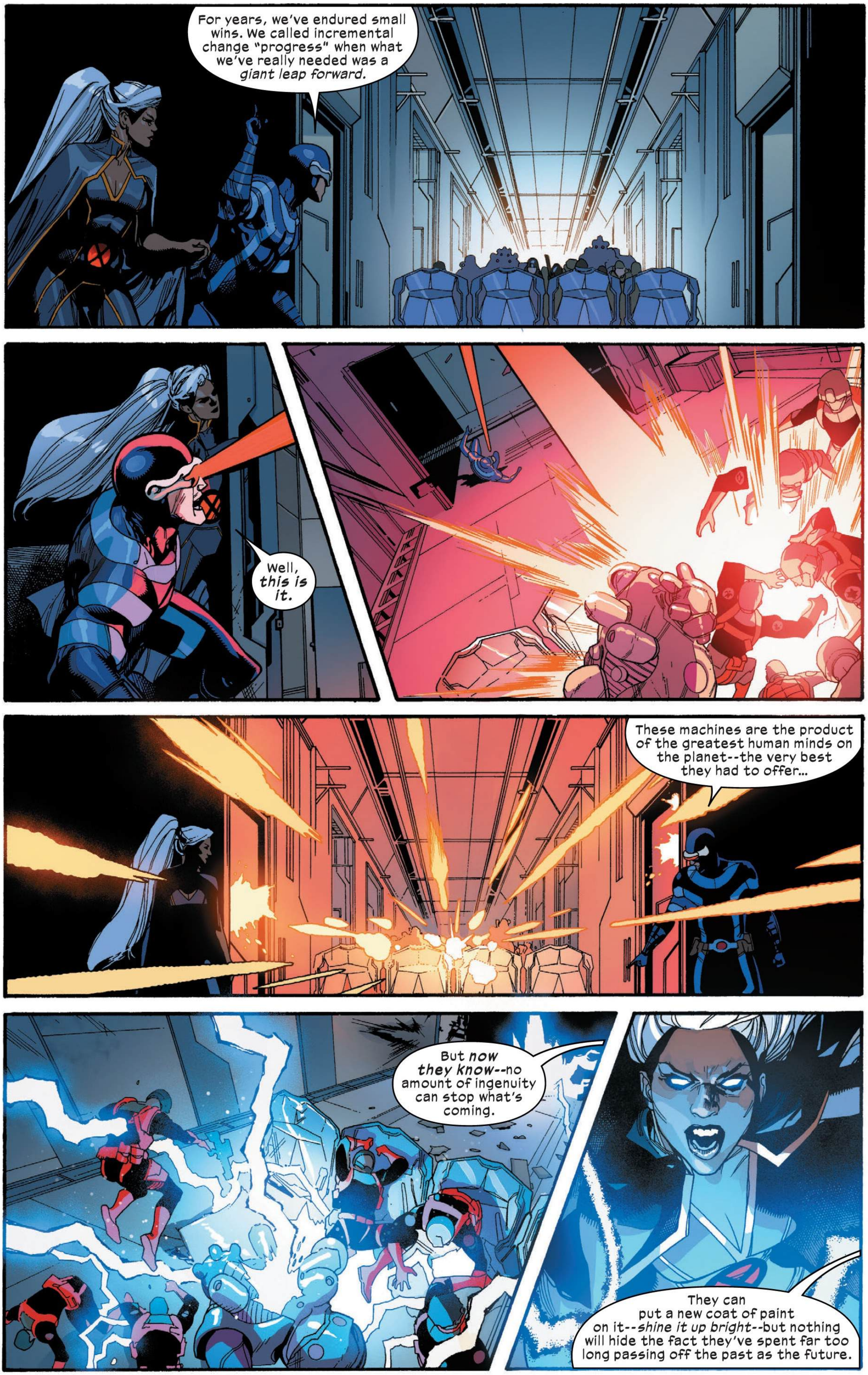

*So be careful, Cyclops!* If you look close enough, you can see the desperation in their eyes!
*Suicide bombs* and *serving the greater good* are always the last refuge of a *conquered people.*
Oh!

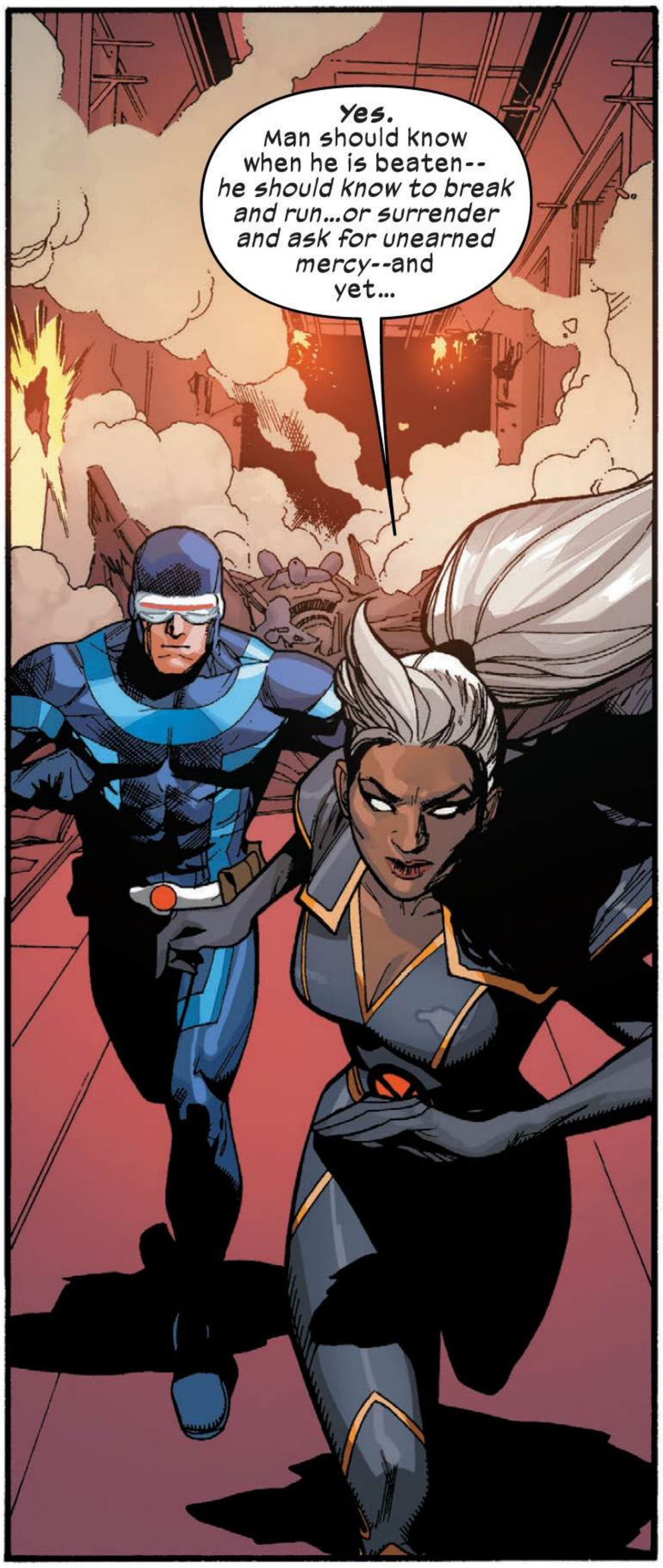


I'm always careful, Storm.
It's part of my charm.

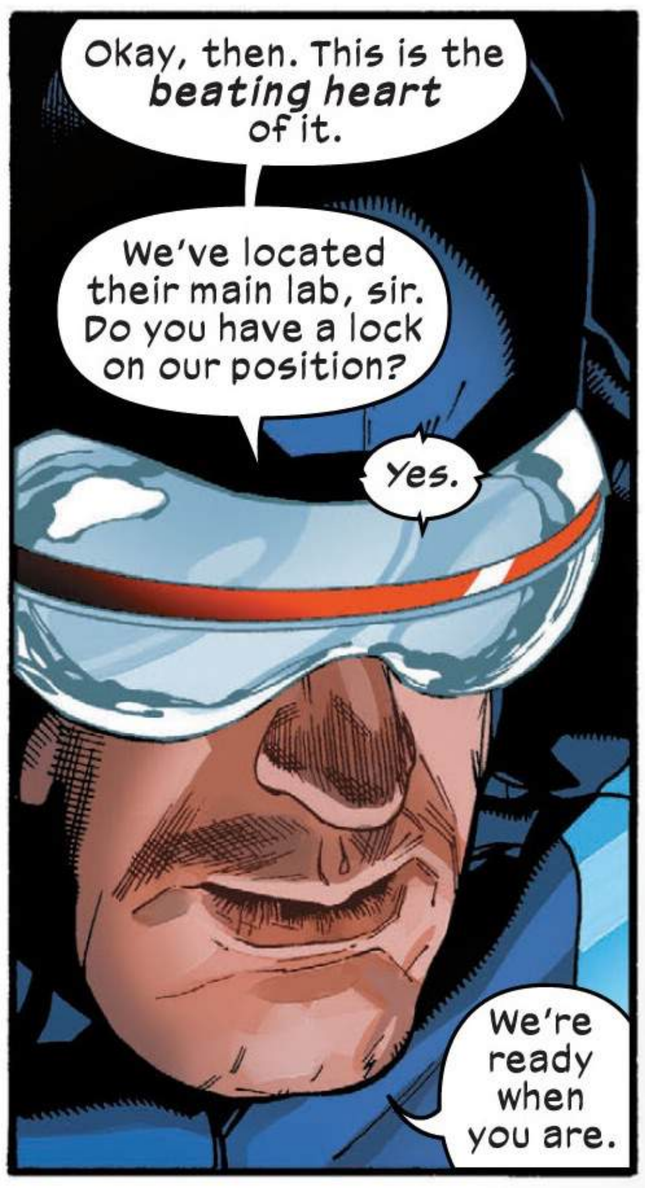
Thank you.
Not a problem.
Surprised the giant purple robot snuck up on you.
It's because I'm tired...but I don't know what I'm more tired of...


...these engines of death or the men who insist on making them.


For years, we've endured small wins. We called incremental change "progress" when what we've really needed was a *giant leap forward.*
Well, *this is it.*
These machines are the product of the greatest human minds on the planet--the very best they had to offer...
But *now they know*--no amount of ingenuity can stop what's coming.
They can put a new coat of paint on it--*shine it up bright*--but nothing will hide the fact they've spent far too long passing off the past as the future.


Yes.
Man should know when he is beaten--he should know to break and run...or surrender and ask for unearned mercy--and yet...

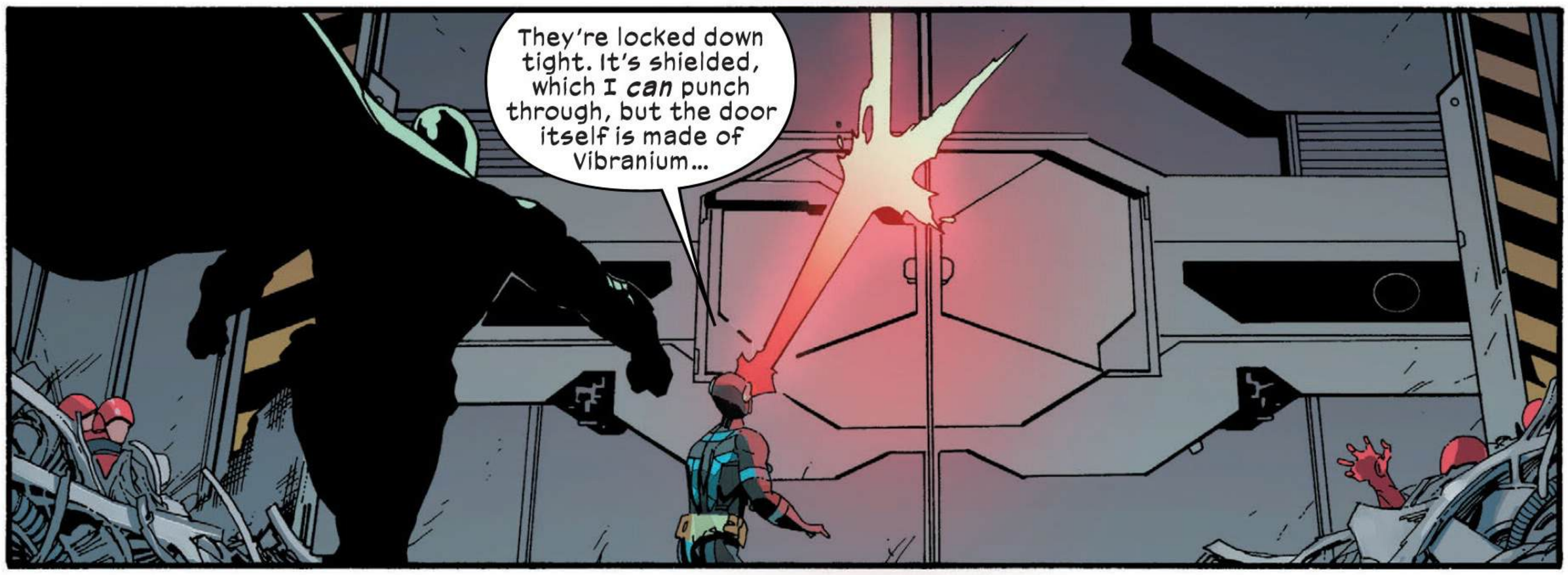
...I can't help but notice they're falling back instead of scattering.
So either they're incredibly well trained or they're protecting something.


Okay, then. This is the *beating heart* of it.
We've located their main lab, sir. Do you have a lock on our position?
Yes.
We're ready when you are.

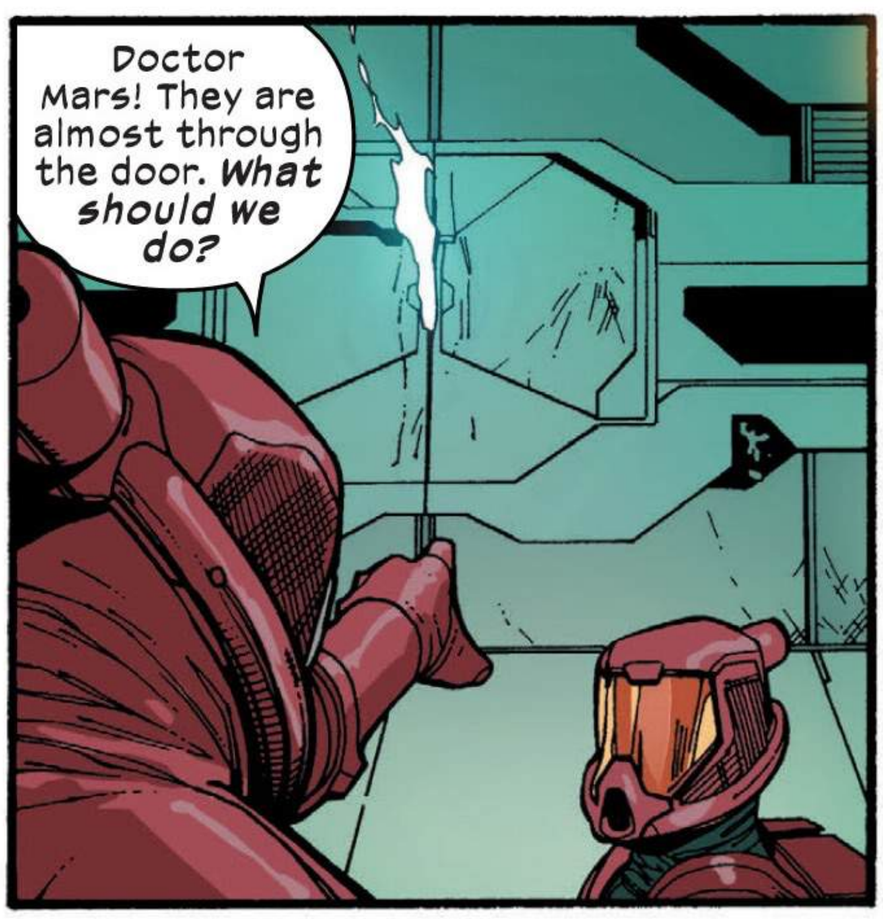
What the--

Oh no.

Magneto.
Polaris, I know that I can be--*at times*--overly demanding, but am I asking too much of a flawed world if I want no rubble--*and certainly no rabble*--beneath my feet when they touch the ground?
Of course not, Father.
Allow me.


They're locked down tight. It's shielded, which I *can* punch through, but the door itself is made of Vibranium...

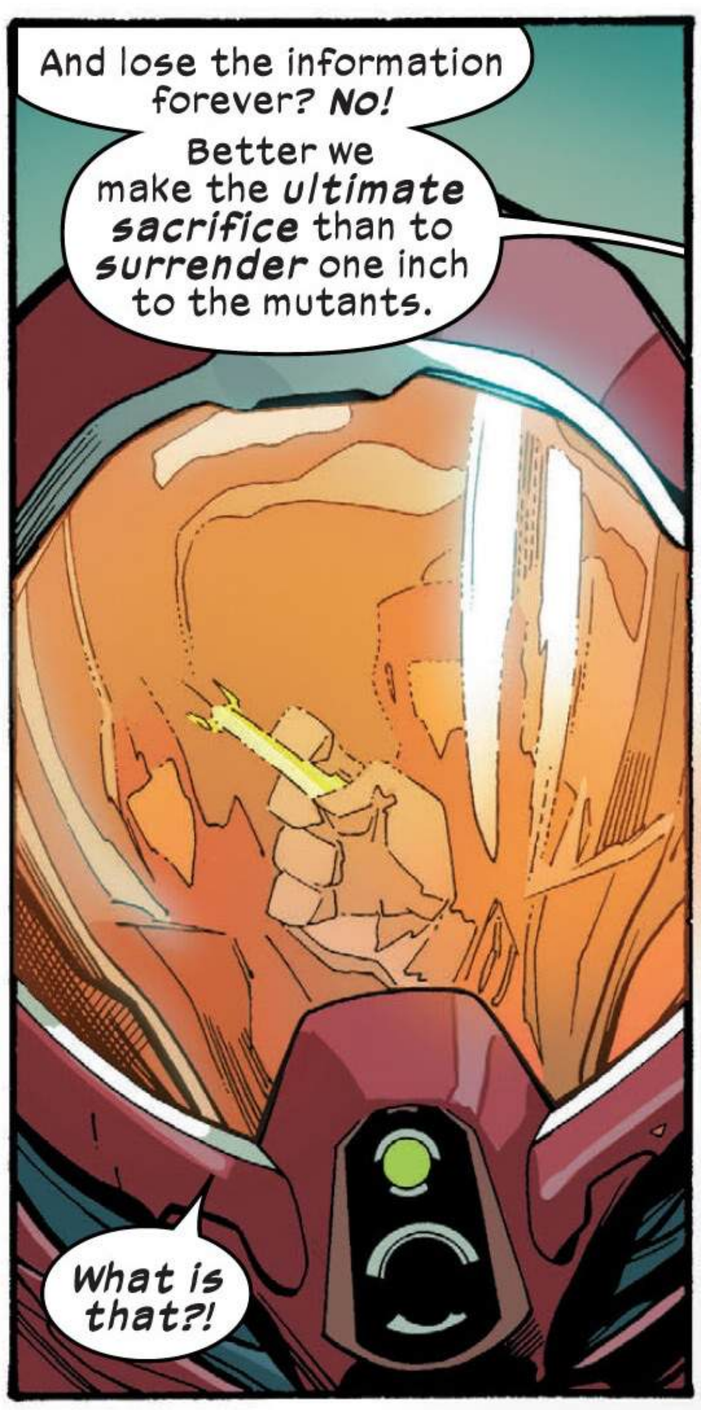
Which you *cannot.*
Step aside, Cyclops.


Doctor Mars! They are almost through the door. *What should we do?*

How much redundancy do we have between this *Hub* and the *Forge?*

There's an 80 percent overlap. So if we fall, our brothers and sisters will still retain a vast majority of the Orchis knowledgebase.

Should I begin purging the mainframes? ***Should I destroy the datacore?***



We're through.
Is that...?
What's that sound?
It's like wild...
Oh!

On your right!
Be careful, they're sure to be savvy--all these apes have PhDs!

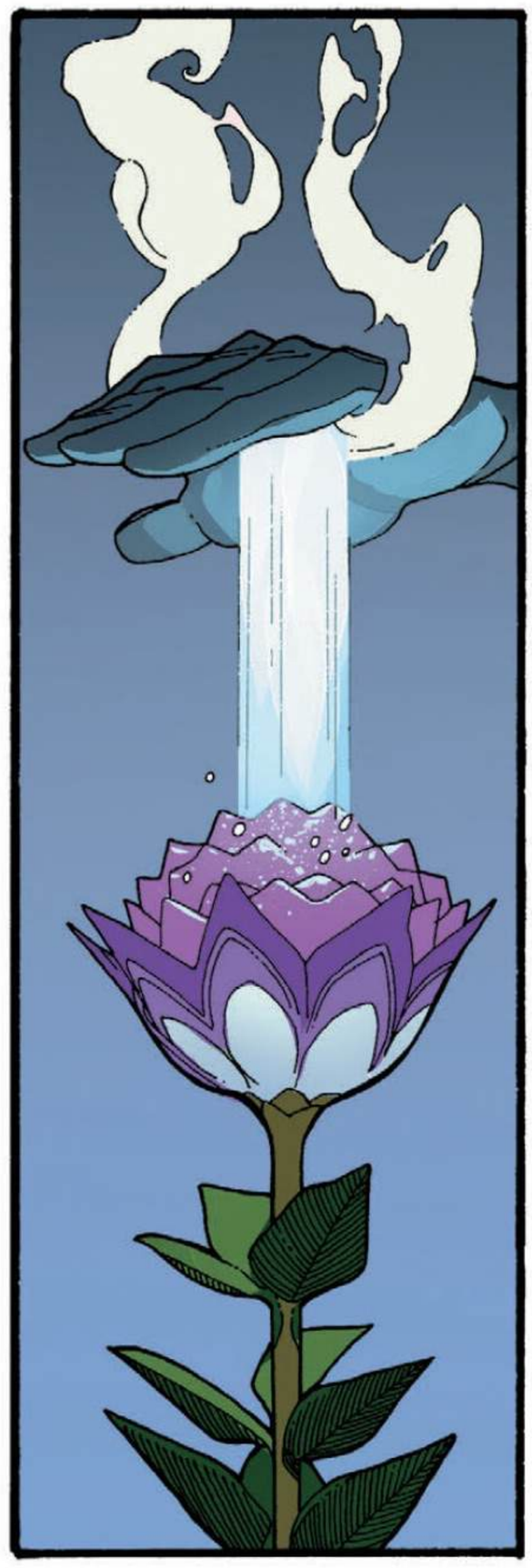
Go! I'll take care of this.
Find them!

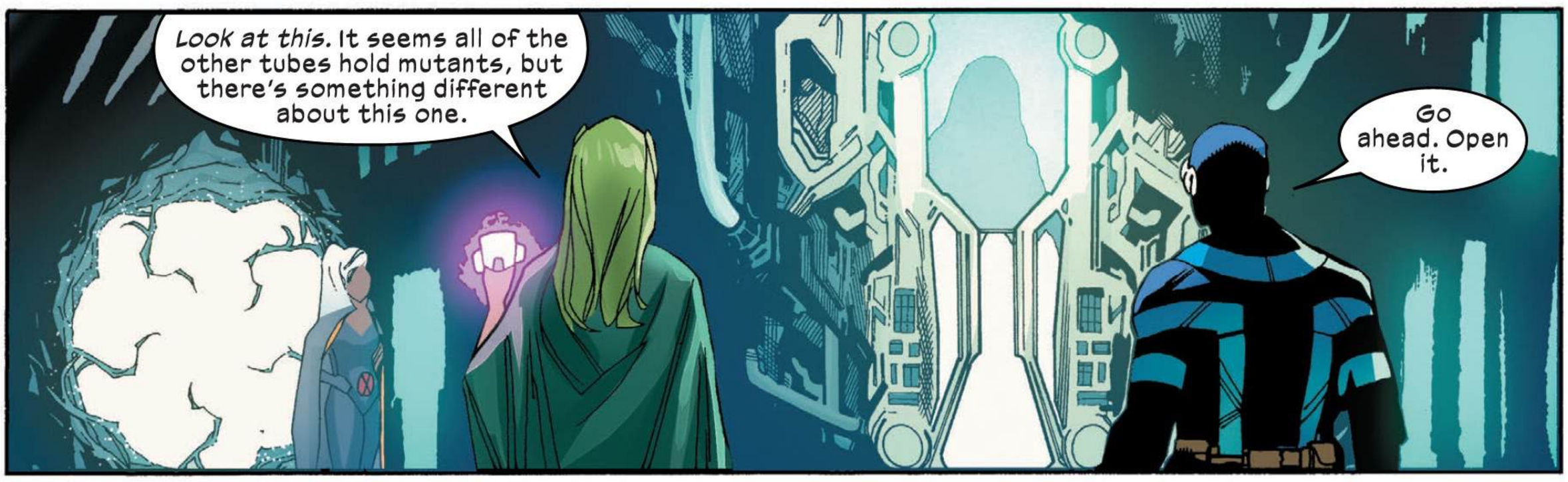
Deep inside the Hub.

There! Stasis tubes.

Goddess. There are over a dozen of them.

How little they must think of themselves to treat others this way.

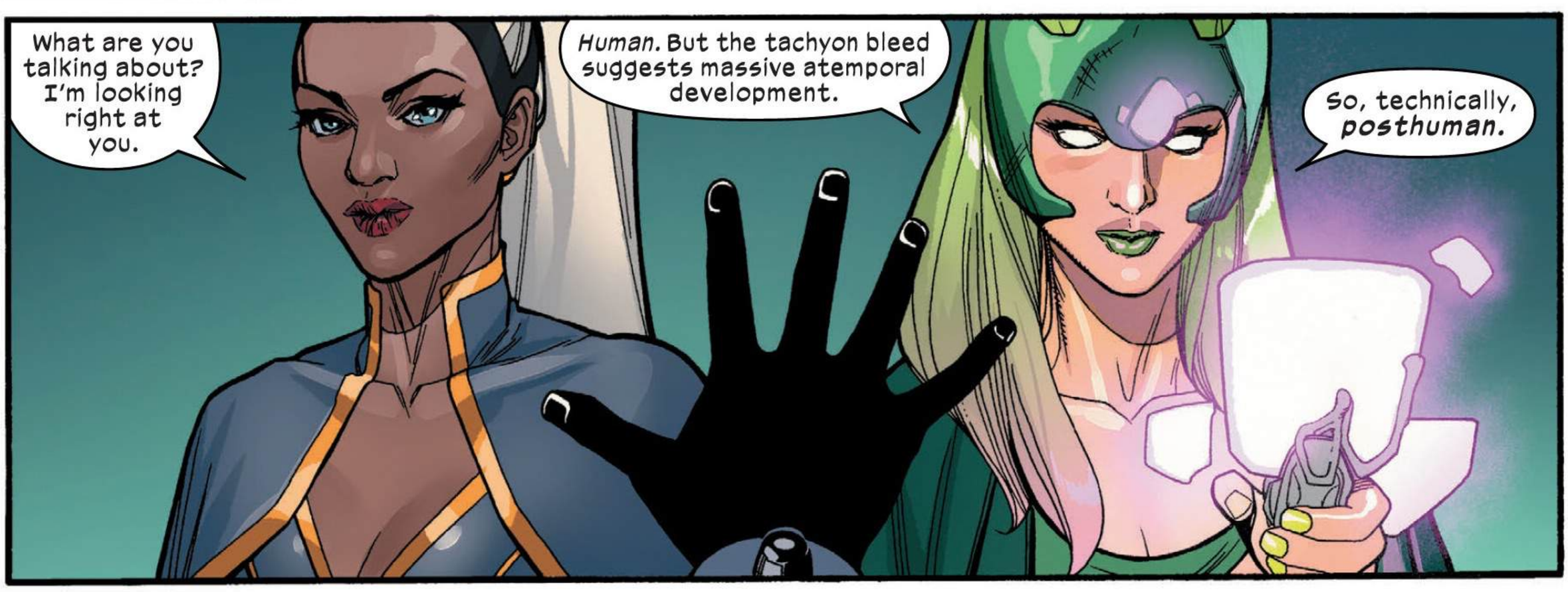


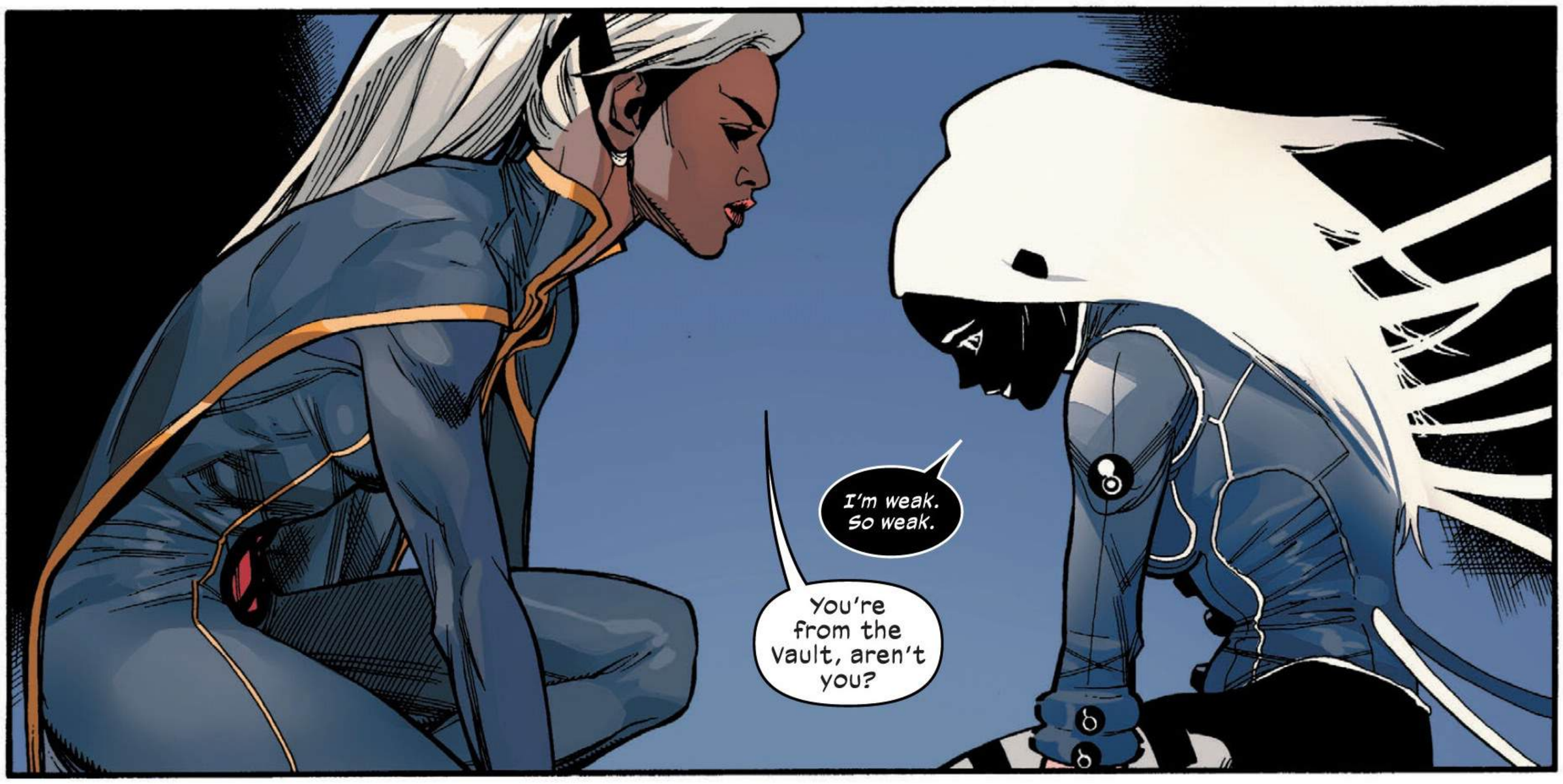

*Look at this.* It seems all of the other tubes hold mutants, but there's something different about this one.
Go ahead. Open it.

PSSHTTT

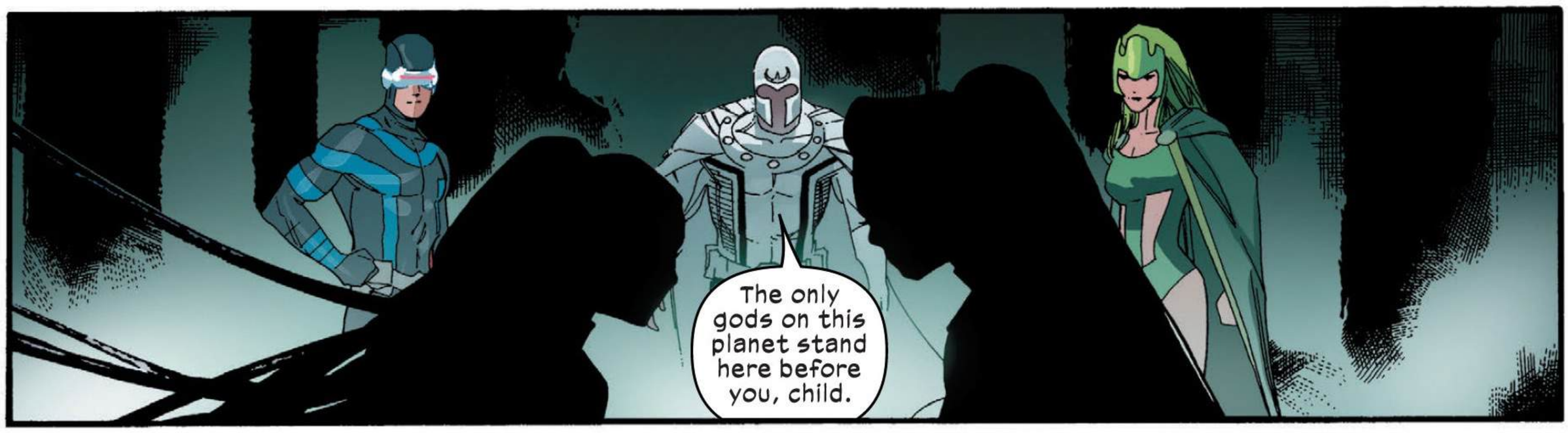
...

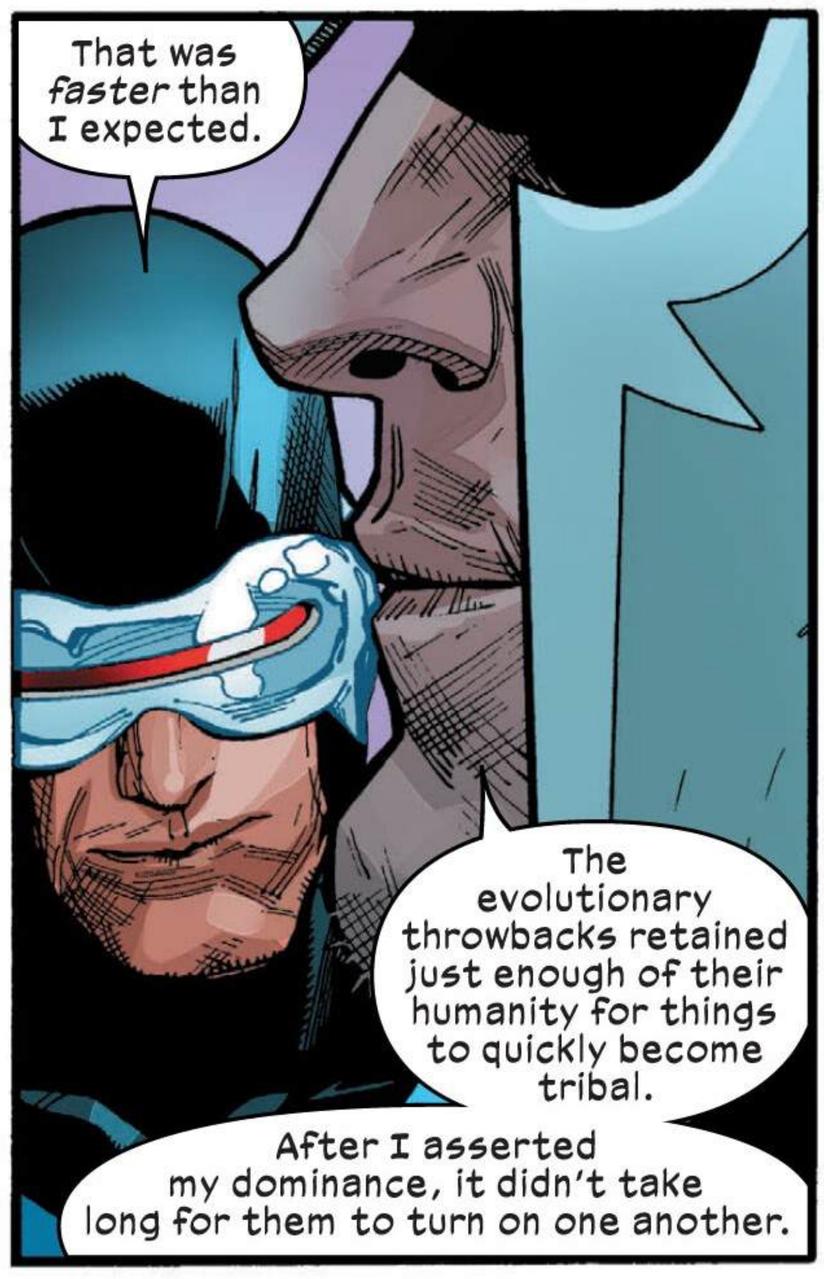
I'm not here.
You don't see me.


What are you talking about? I'm looking right at you.
*Human.* But the tachyon bleed suggests massive atemporal development.
So, technically, *posthuman.*

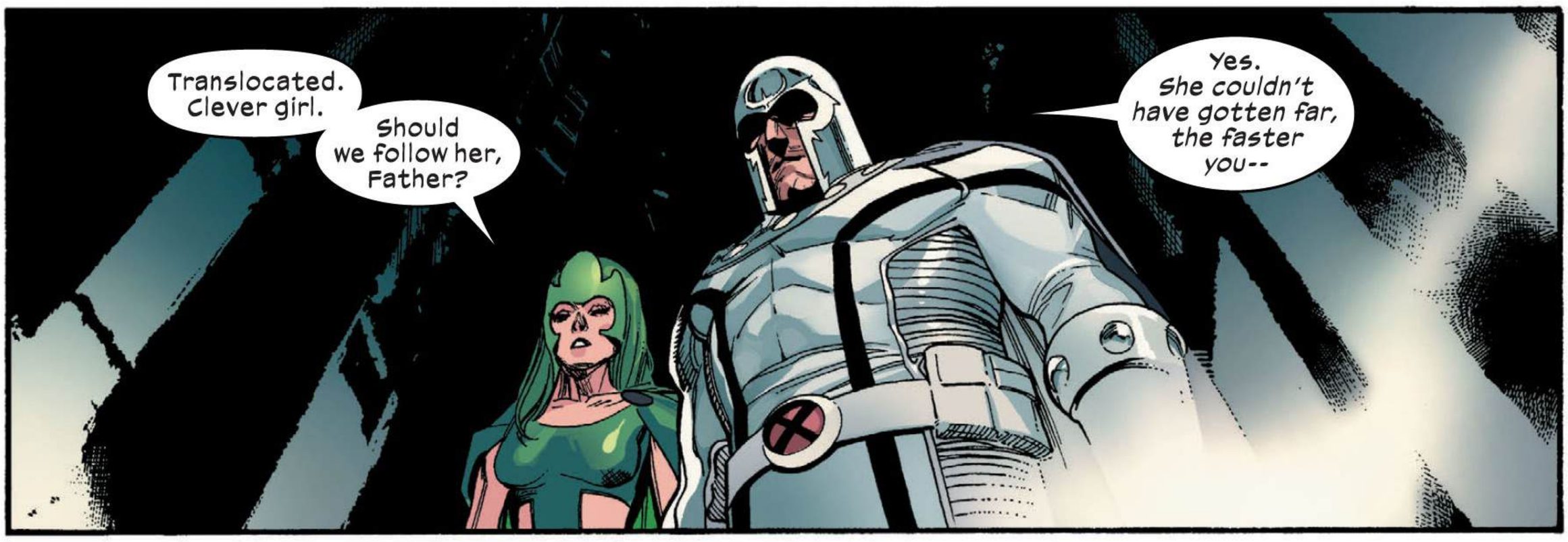

I'm weak. So weak.
You're from the Vault, aren't you?

I emerged before I was fully cooked. A child born out of time.
But I had to, don't you see...
There are wild gods loose in the world.


The only gods on this planet stand here before you, child.

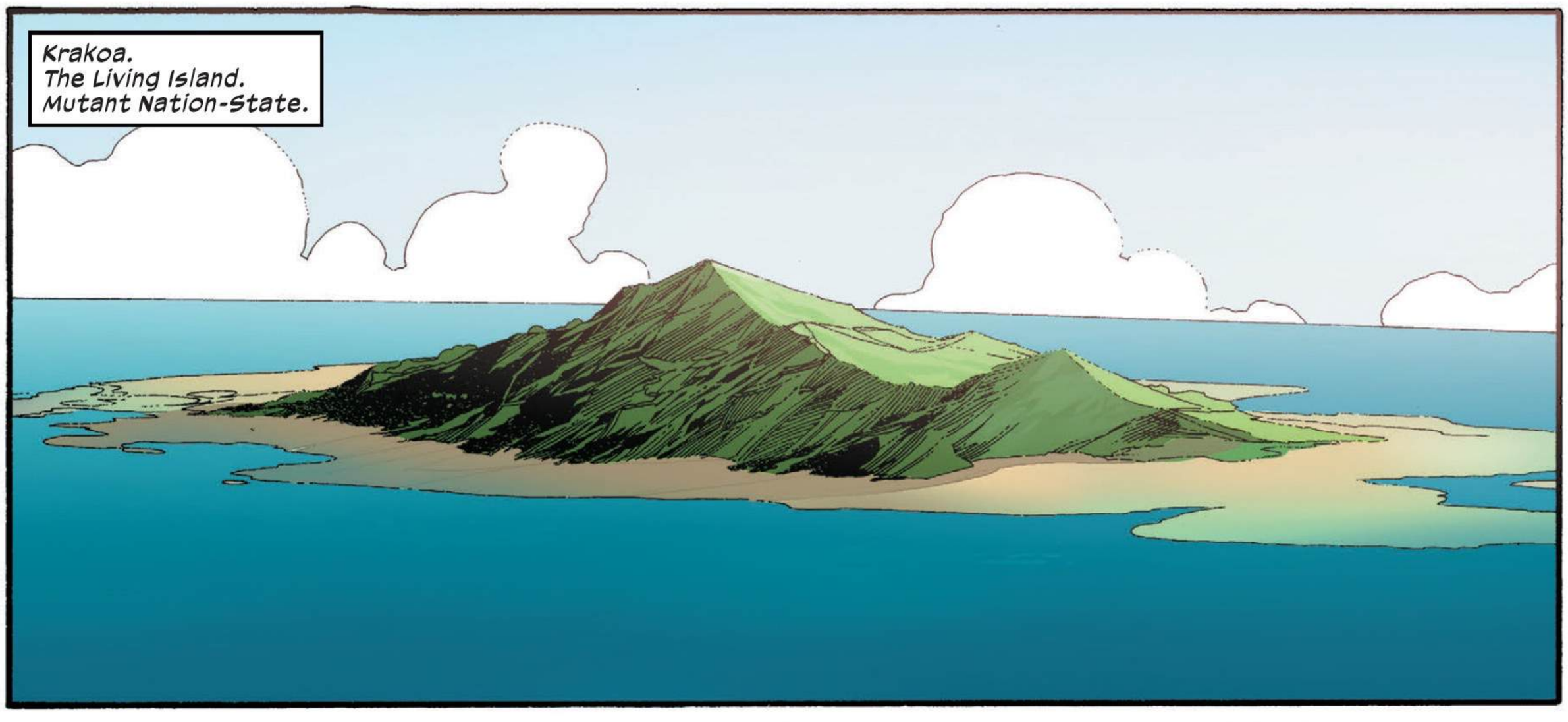

That was *faster* than I expected.
The evolutionary throwbacks retained just enough of their humanity for things to quickly become tribal.
After I asserted my dominance, it didn't take long for them to turn on one another.

Have to go...
Wait! Don't!


Translocated. Clever girl.
Should we follow her, Father?
Yes. She couldn't have gotten far, the faster you--

*No.* That's not our priority. If the council wants to make it one, we can deal with that later...
But for now, we have more important things to do.

Let's get these children *home.*




All things considered, they seem fairly healthy, Doctor Reyes, but I'd like to be sure that--

*Don't worry,* they're in good hands now...and if we do find anything physically wrong, we have a healer standing by.

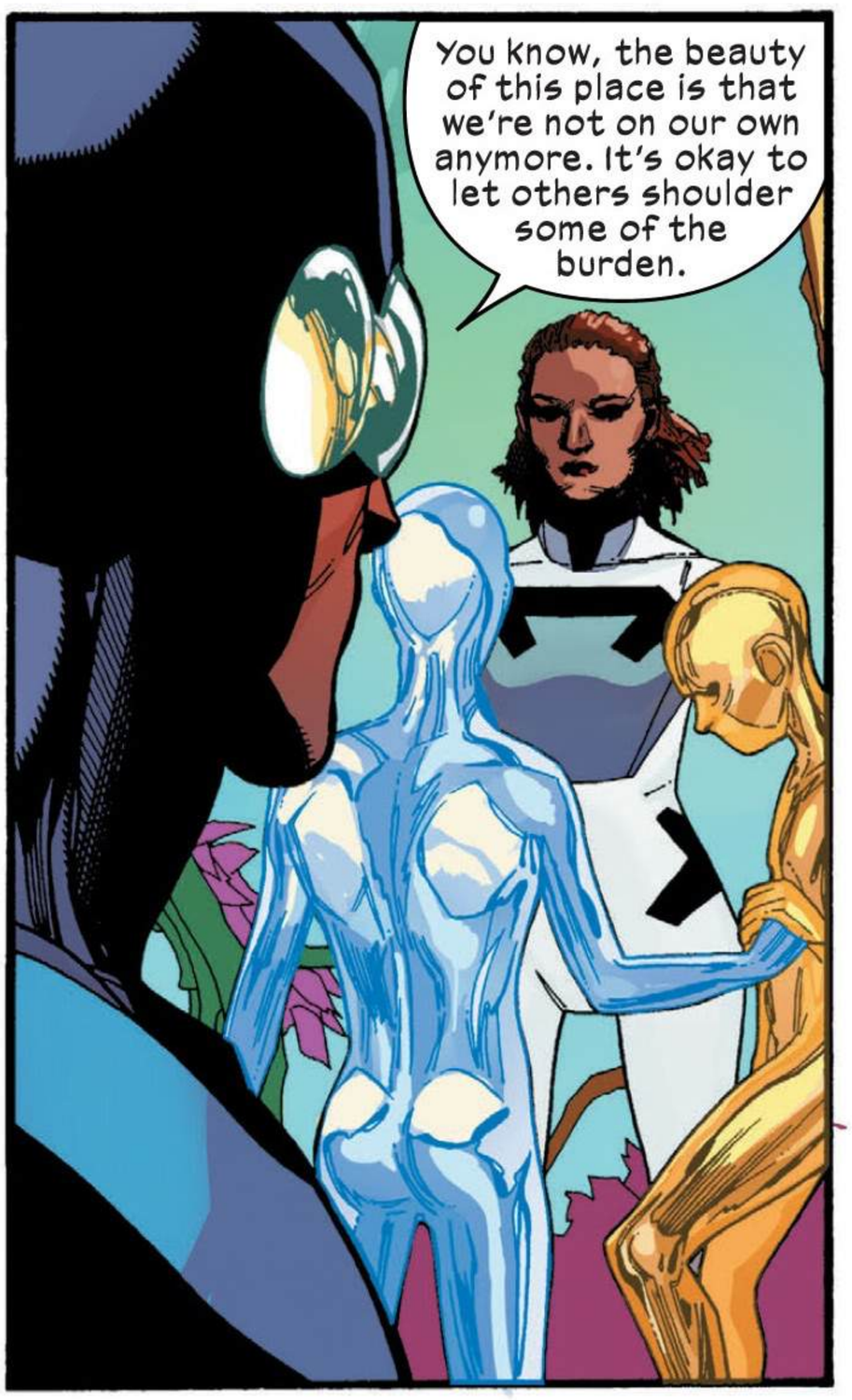
But if I'm being honest, my greatest concern is any underlying psychological trauma they might have after what they've been through.

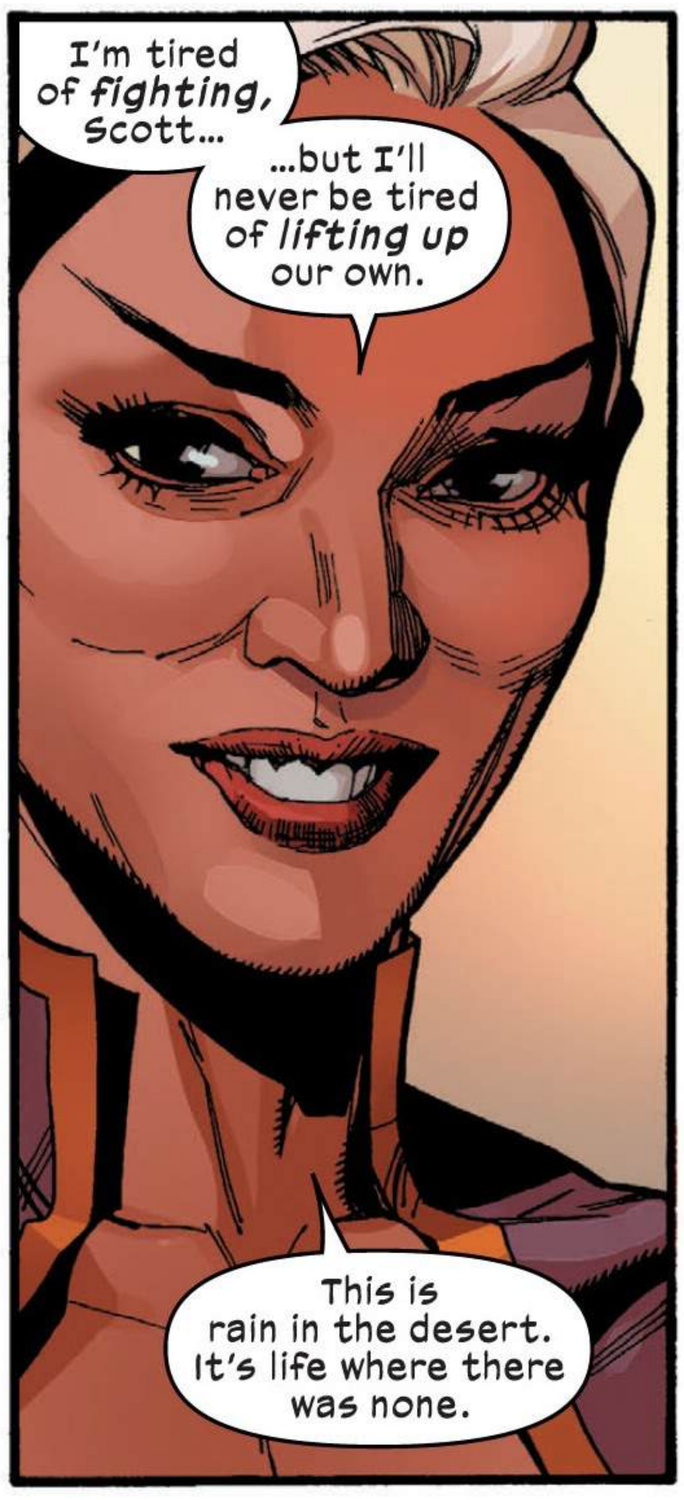
Even then...we have empaths--*and some fairly gifted telepaths*--who are standing by ready to help.

To say nothing of clean water, clear skies and all the ***good things*** that come from living in paradise.

Doctor, if you don't mind, I'm going to stay with these two until you check them out.
They haven't spoken, but the amount of energy they're radiating is... I'd just be more comfortable waiting until you--
Of course, Storm. Happy to have the help.

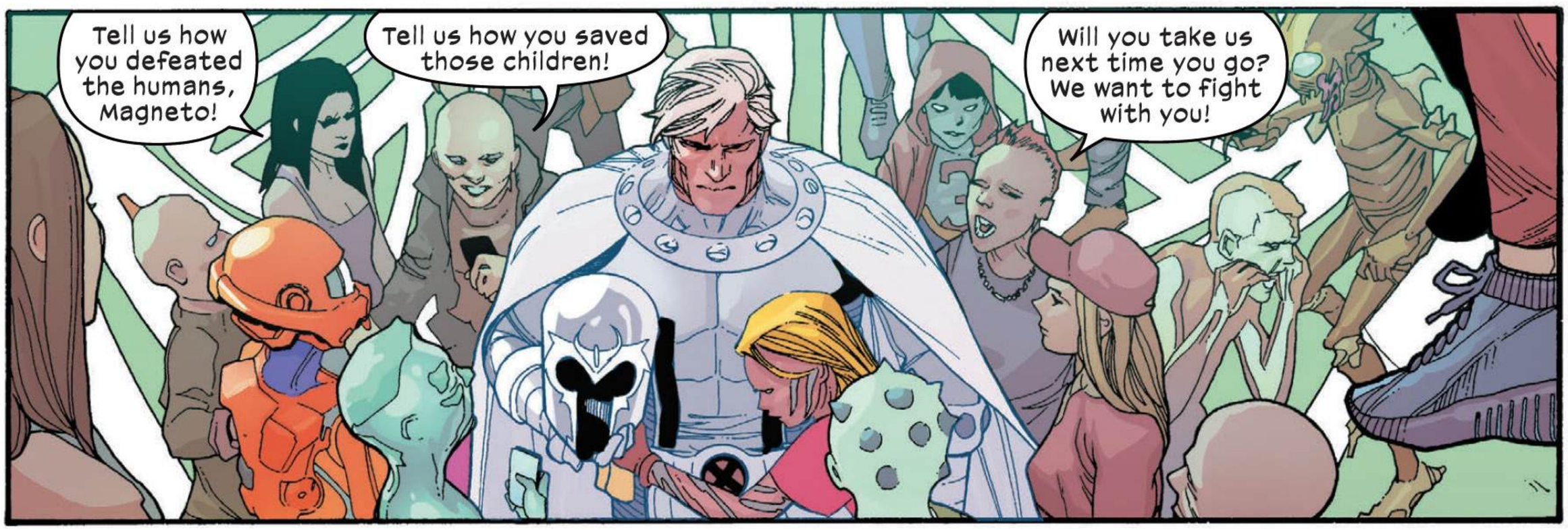
You sure you feel like sticking around? We've been going nonstop for the last week. You seemed a little beat out there.
Yes. I am sure.


You know, the beauty of this place is that we're not on our own anymore. It's okay to let others shoulder some of the burden.

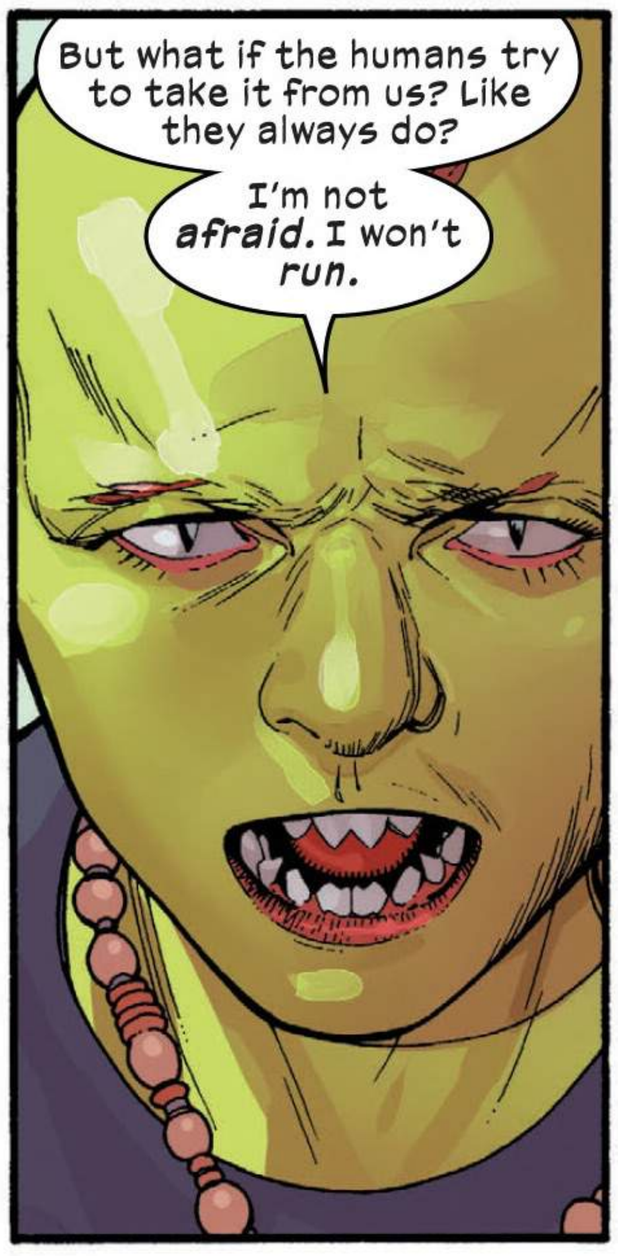

I'm tired of *fighting*, Scott...
...but I'll never be tired of *lifting up* our own.
This is rain in the desert. It's life where there was none.

*Fair enough.*
But I'll check in later. *Just in case.*

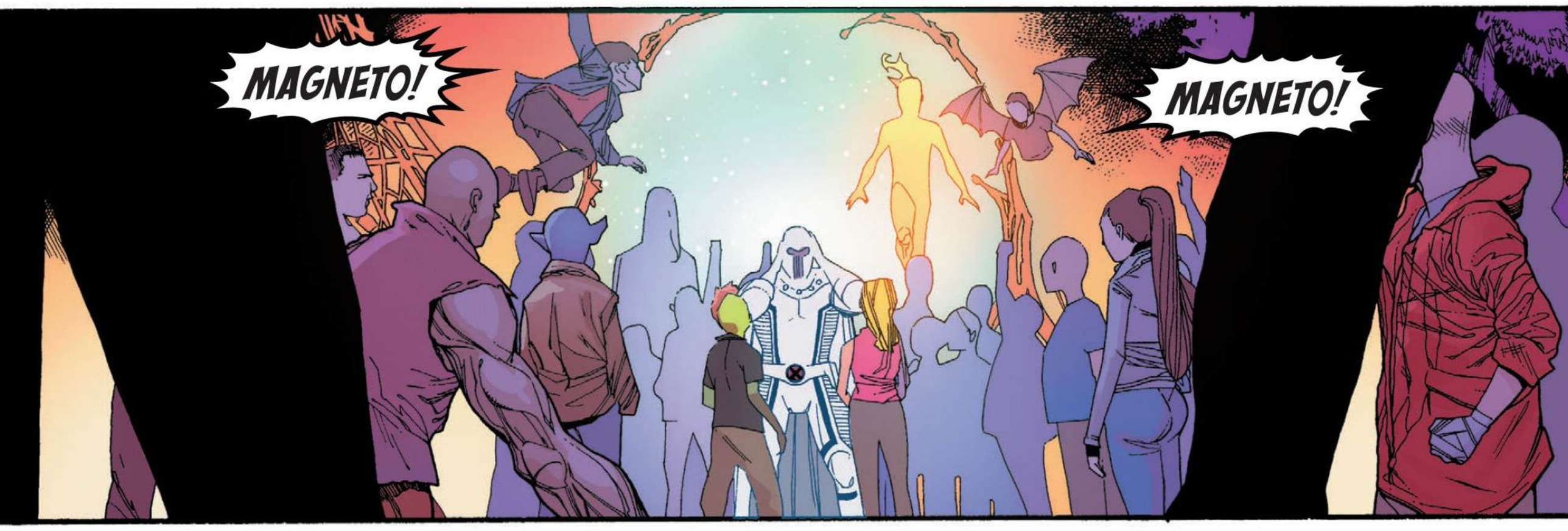
MAGNETO'S BACK!
MAGNETO!
MAGNETO!

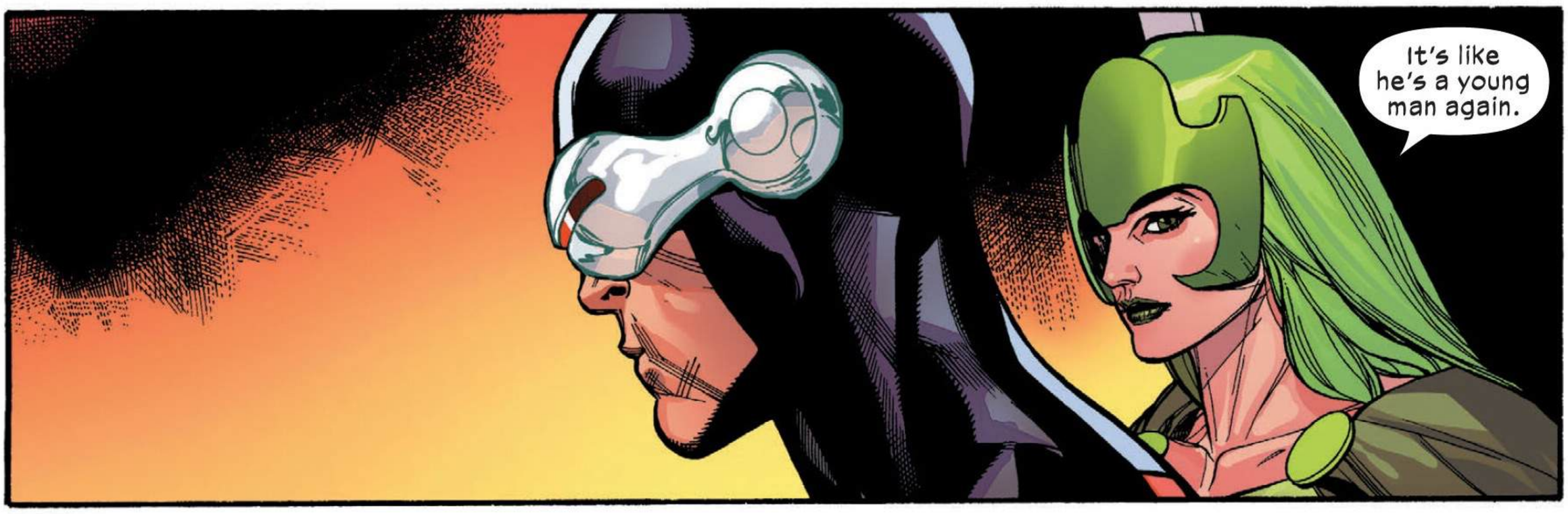

Tell us how you defeated the humans, Magneto!
Tell us how you saved those children!
Will you take us next time you go? We want to fight with you!

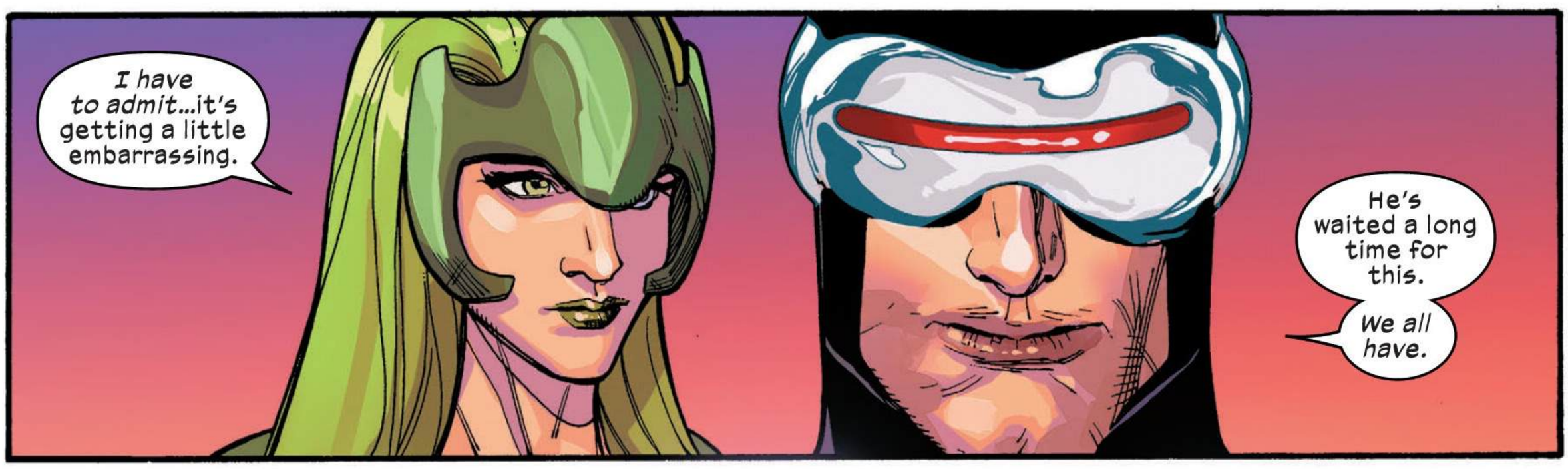
I've spent my life fighting so you would never have to, my child. I've wasted too much of my life at war with the humans.
But it was worth it because now you have Krakoa, and Krakoa is all you will ever need.

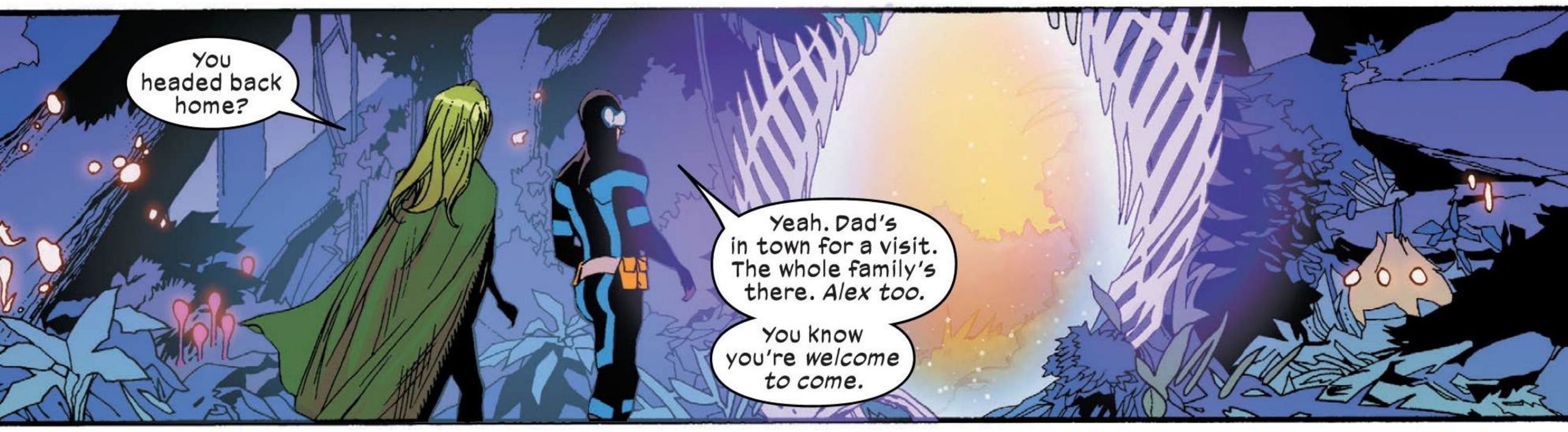

But what if the humans try to take it from us? Like they always do?
I'm not *afraid.* I won't *run.*

You won't have to. For I am *Magneto.* Let man run from me.


MAGNETO!
MAGNETO!


It's like he's a young man again.

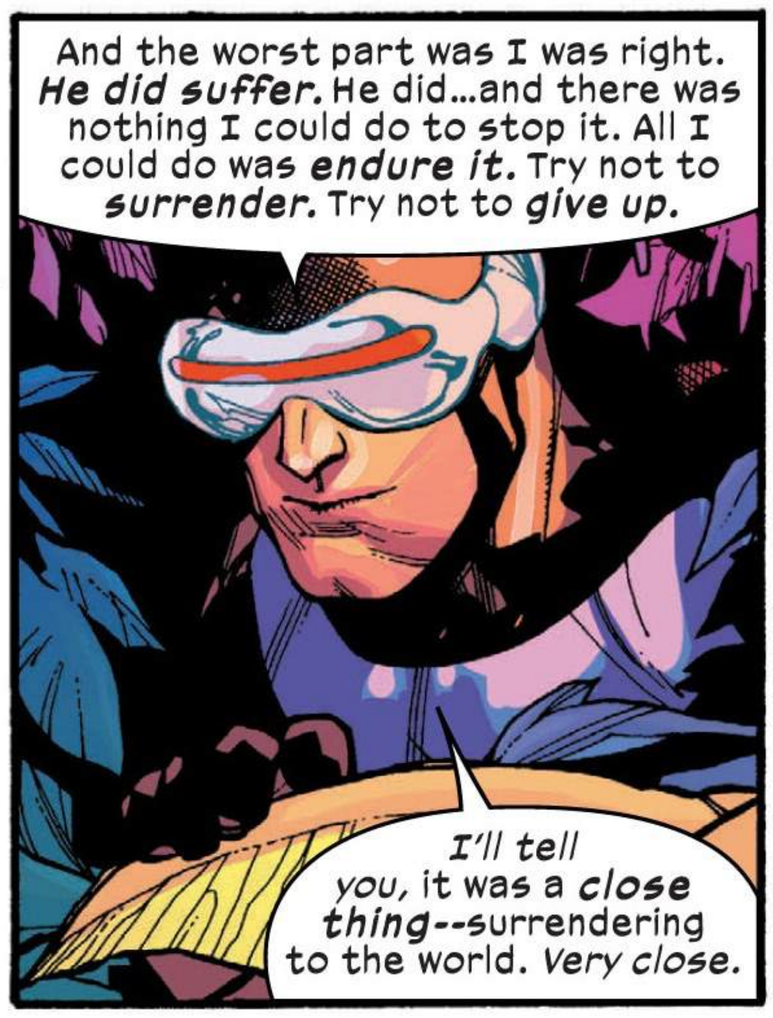

I have to admit...it's getting a little embarrassing.
He's waited a long time for this.
We all have.


You headed back home?
Yeah. Dad's in town for a visit. The whole family's there. Alex too.
You know you're welcome to come.

Maybe next time.
When the past is the past and I'm not still finding my way in a new land.

It's something, isn't it?
You know, I remember the day my son was born-- I remember the sheer terror of it. Not the idea of being a father--my god, I loved that. I had waited my whole life for that...

It was thinking about what kind of world I had brought this precious, innocent child into.
The horrors that my beautiful boy would have to endure simply because he was my son-- of my blood. Like me.


And the worst part was I was right. He did suffer. He did...and there was nothing I could do to stop it. All I could do was endure it. Try not to surrender. Try not to give up.
I'll tell you, it was a close thing--surrendering to the world. Very close.

But I *held on.*
And, look, I have you, and your father, and my family...*my boy.*
And we are home.
Because I *believed in a thing...* and now it's real.
Scott?
Yeah?
Do you really believe that?
*Every single word of it.*

The Orchis Forge.

"*Orchis* was created to be the last gasp of the last generation--a doomsday weapon composed of human minds--the greatest ever assembled..."

Free from the warring ideologies that have paralyzed the civilian world, we were scientists from S.H.I.E.L.D., A.I.M., A.R.M.O.R. and Alpha Flight.

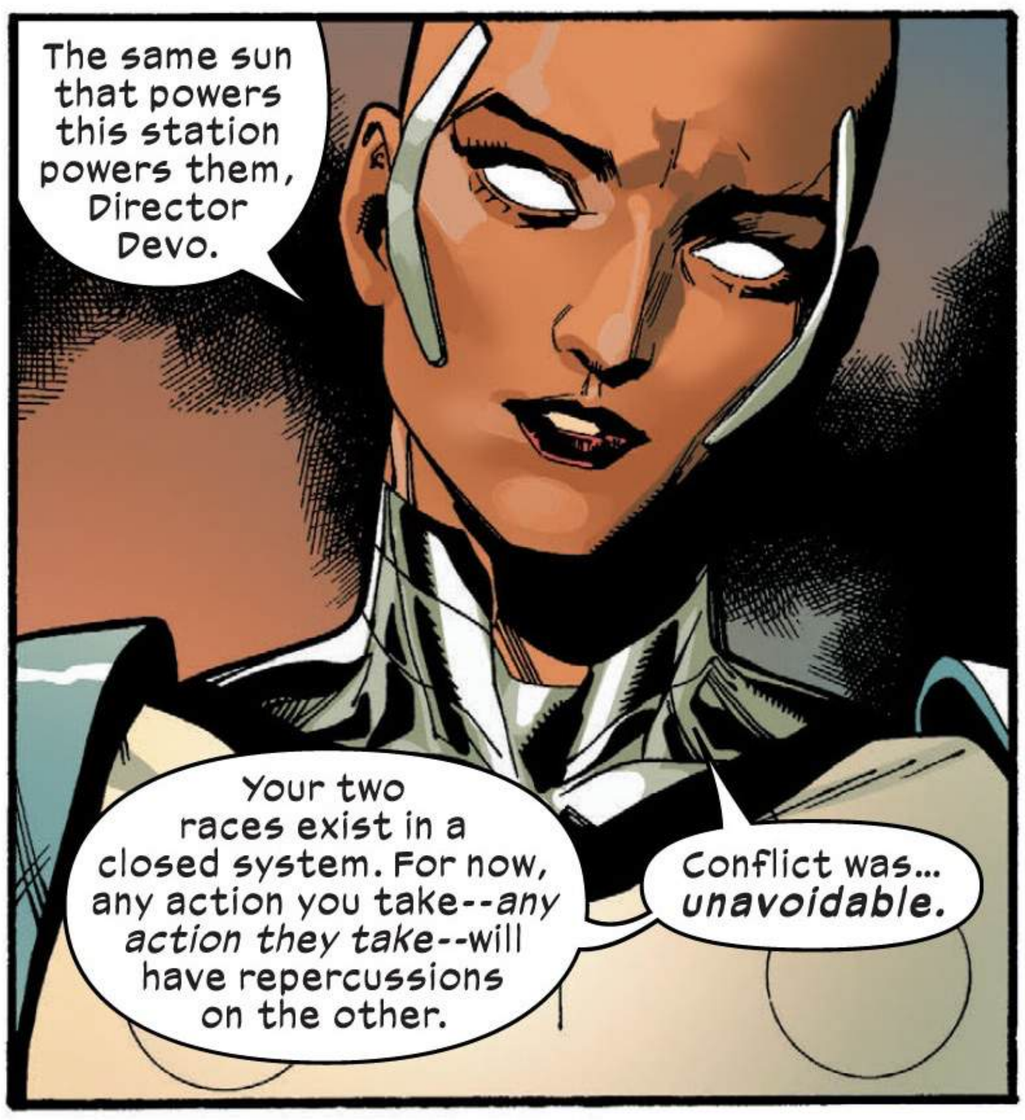
You also have a small army of H.A.M.M.E.R. parasites and six--*SIX*--infernal geneticists from Hydra.

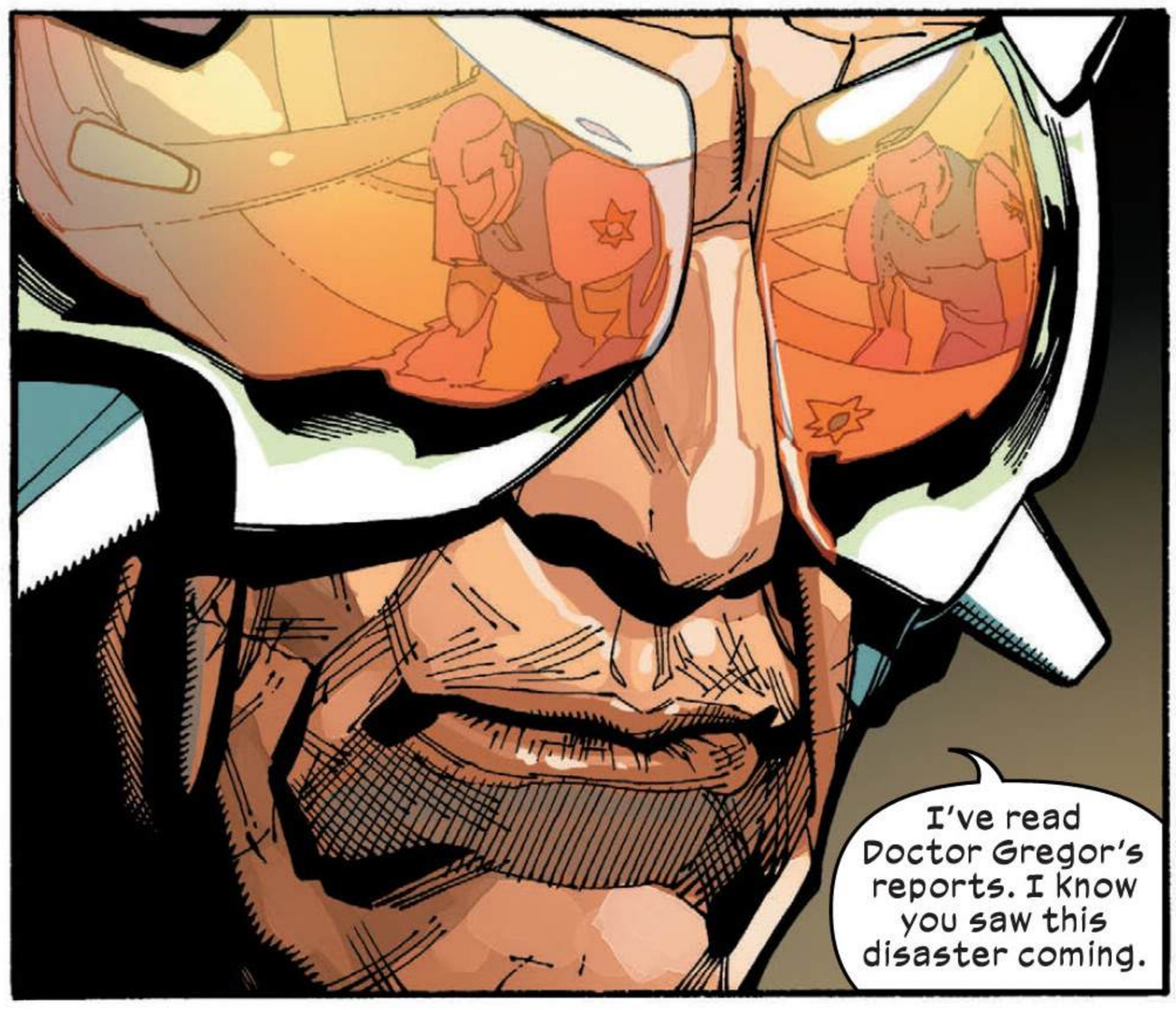
Yes, well...there are lesser evils we tolerate for the greater good. Because, you see, what we do here is all that matters: *survival.*

For our enemy is the future, and *this* is what comes from forgetting that.

Mutants...

...just look at what they *have done.*

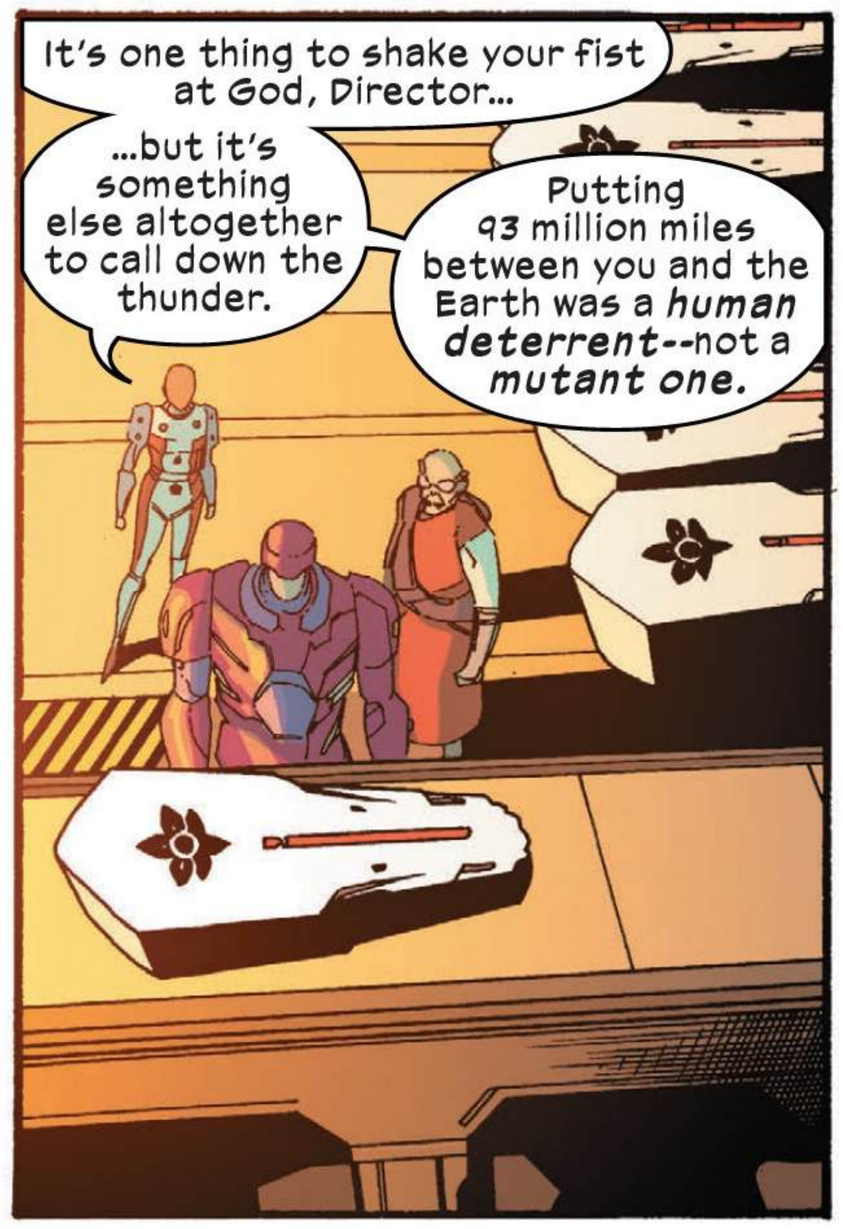


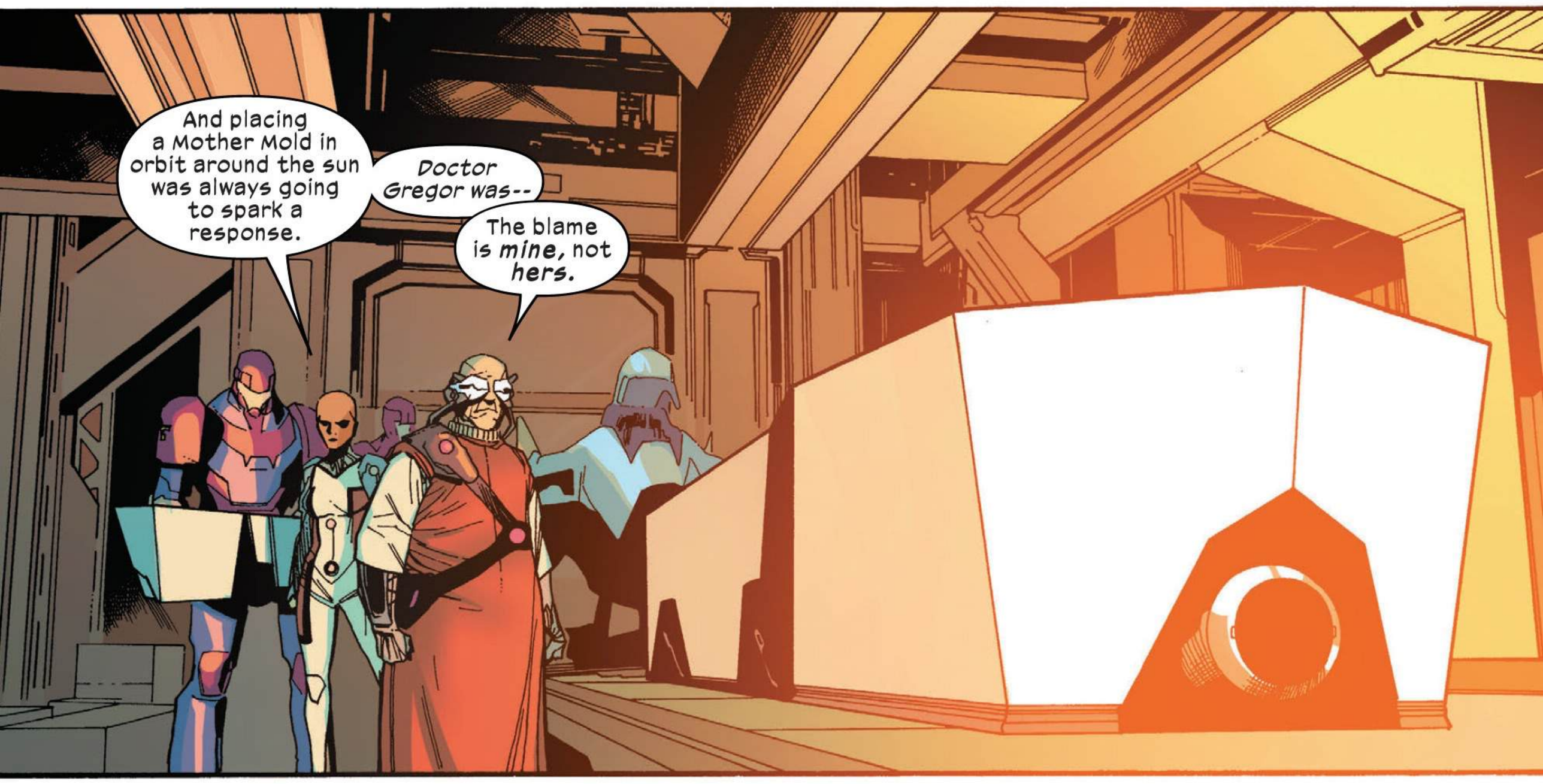



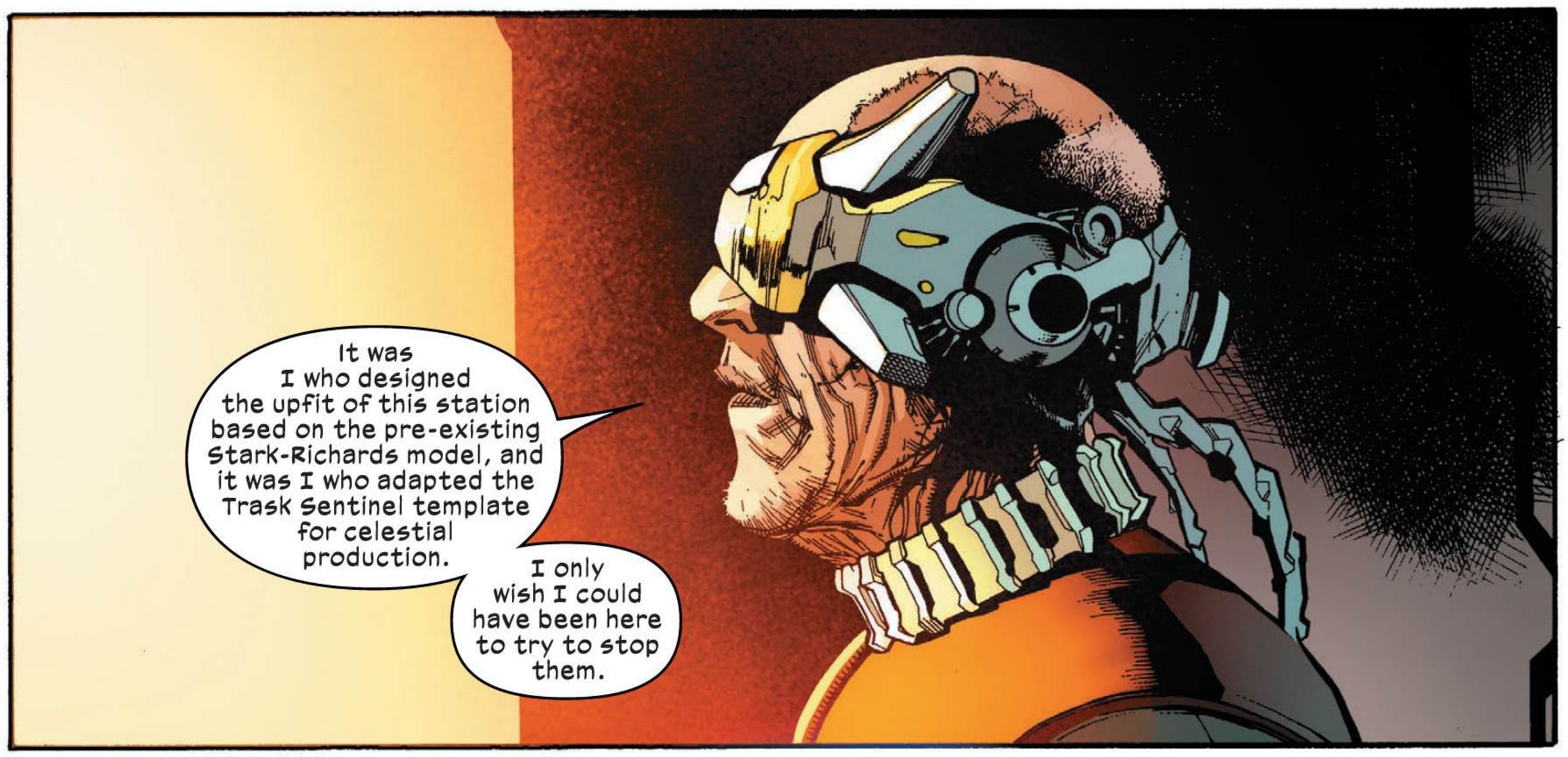
Oh, the signs were there for anyone to see.

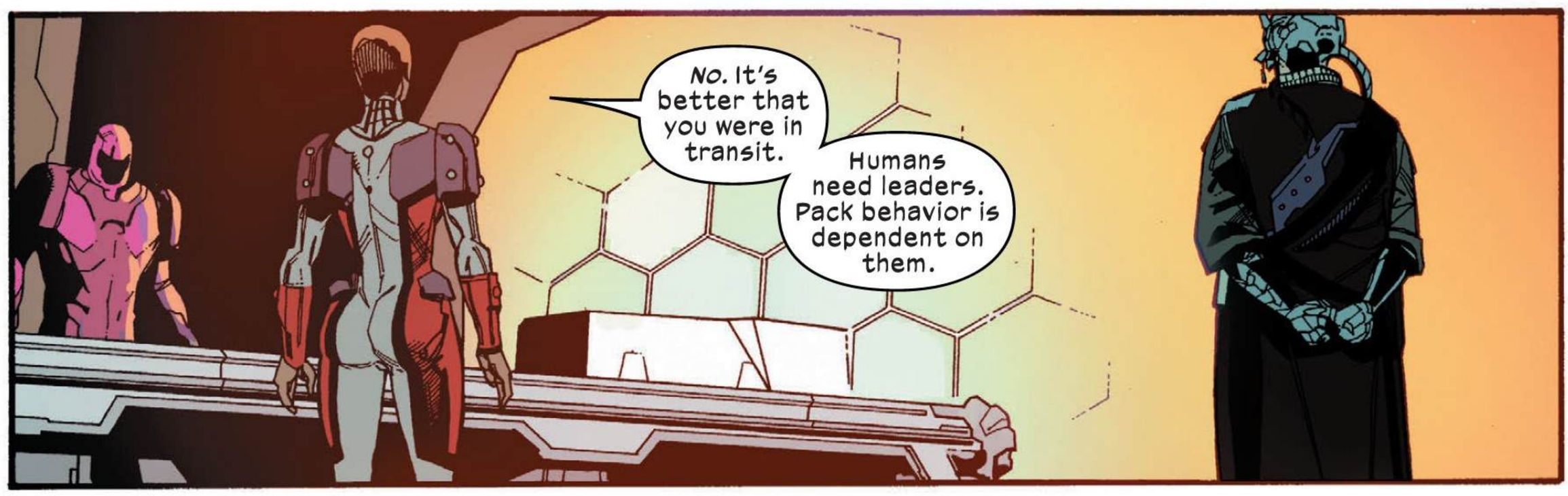
We aren't all gifted with the *machine brain* of an Omega Sentinel, Karima.
Humans will always be slaves to our emotions...

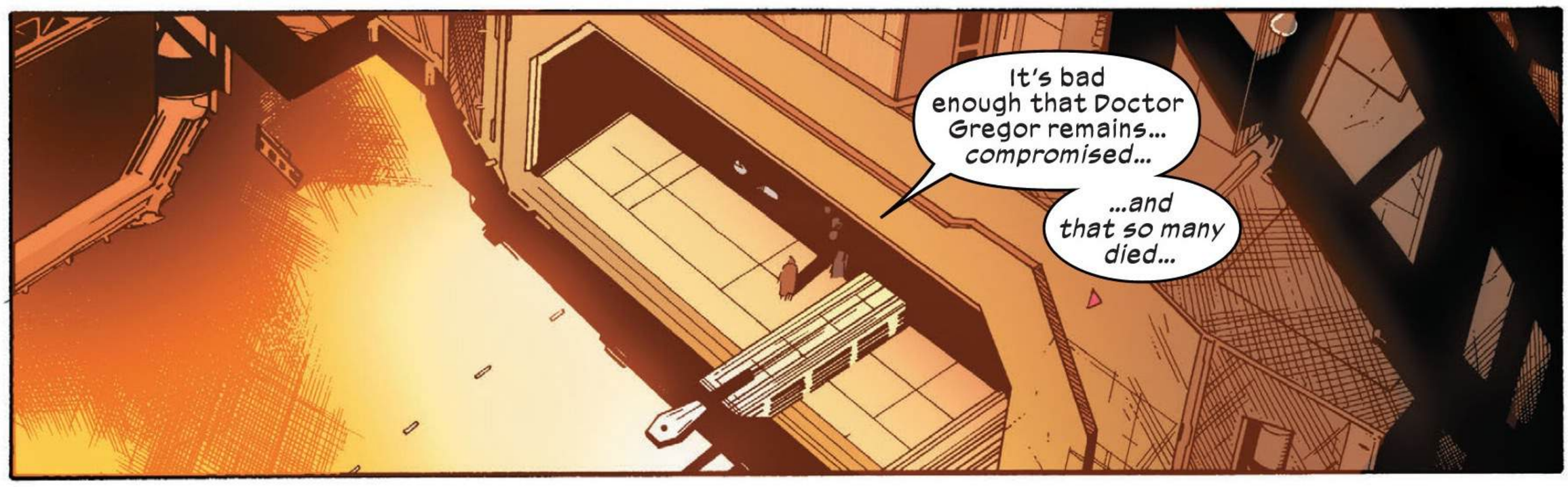
...and in that spirit, we built the Forge as a last hope for humanity.
A great refuge in case evolution saw fit to leave mankind behind.

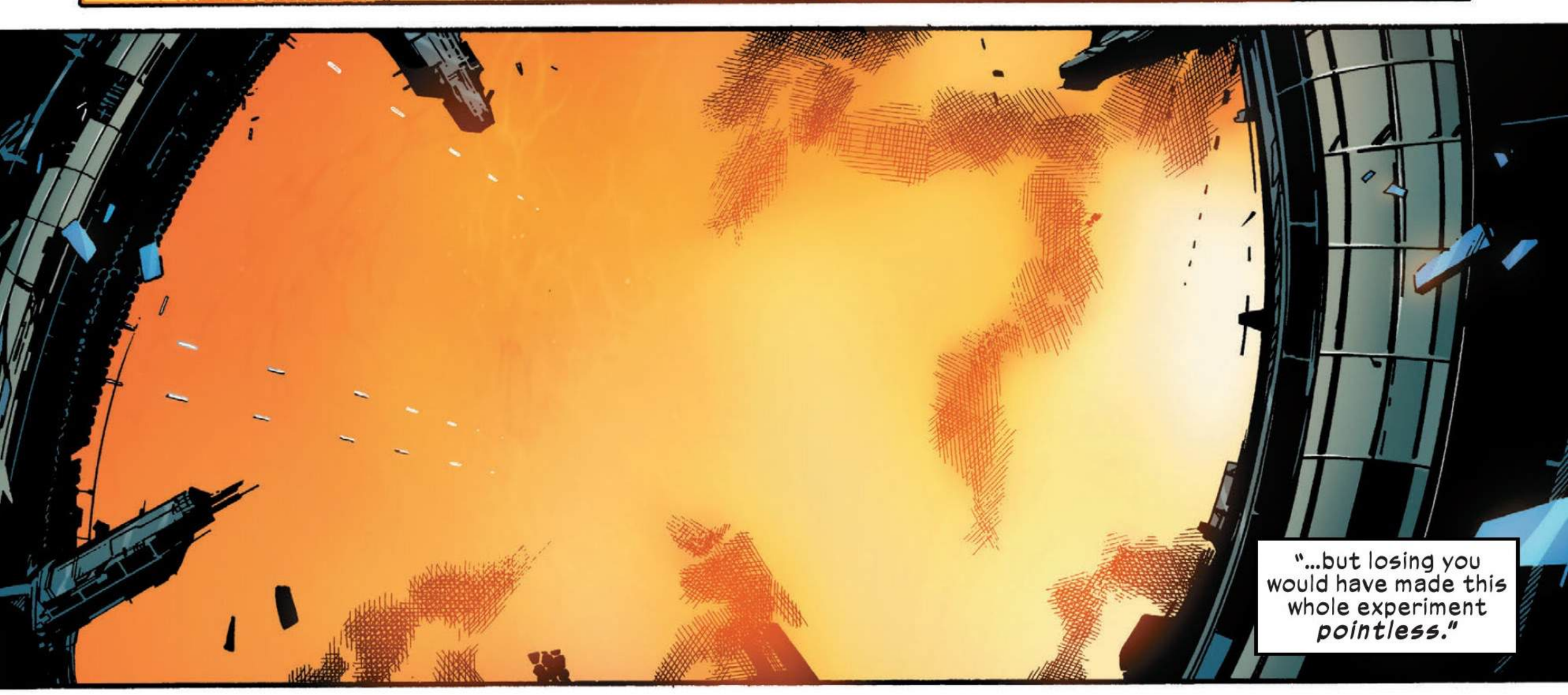

It's one thing to shake your fist at God, Director...
...but it's something else altogether to call down the thunder.
Putting 93 million miles between you and the Earth was a *human deterrent*--not a *mutant one.*

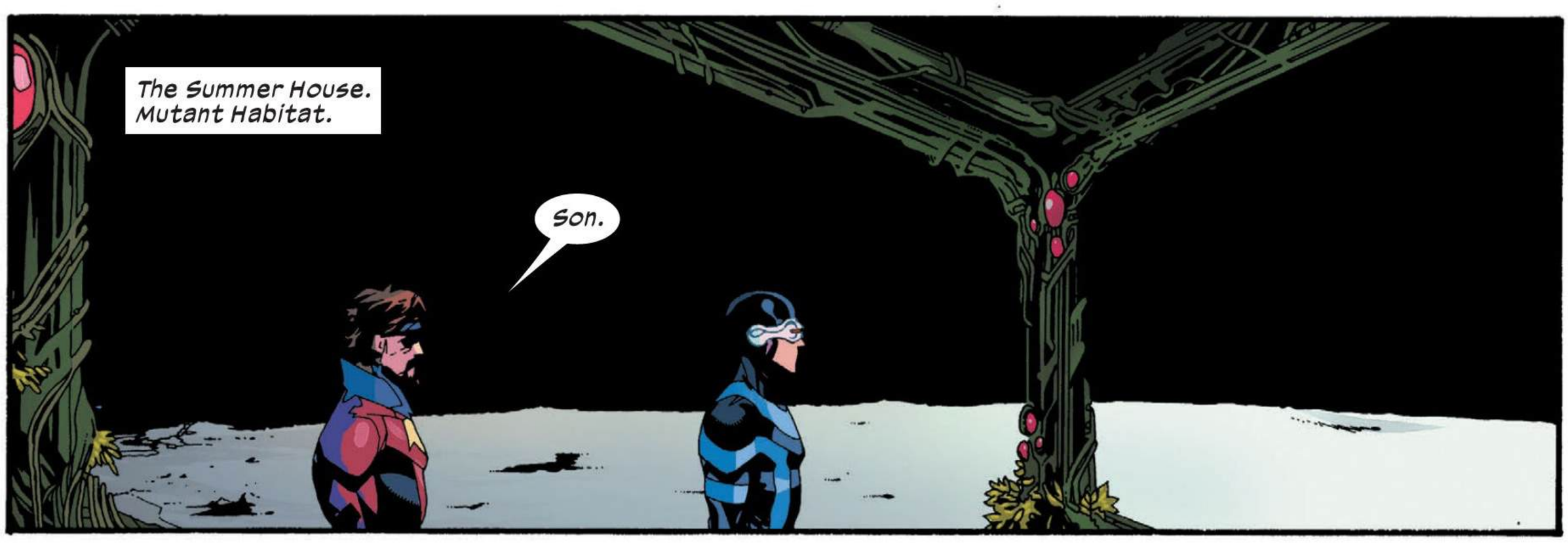

And placing a Mother Mold in orbit around the sun was always going to spark a response.
Doctor Gregor was--
The blame is *mine,* not *hers.*


It was I who designed the upfit of this station based on the pre-existing Stark-Richards model, and it was I who adapted the Trask Sentinel template for celestial production.
I only wish I could have been here to try to stop them.


No. It's better that you were in transit.
Humans need leaders. Pack behavior is dependent on them.

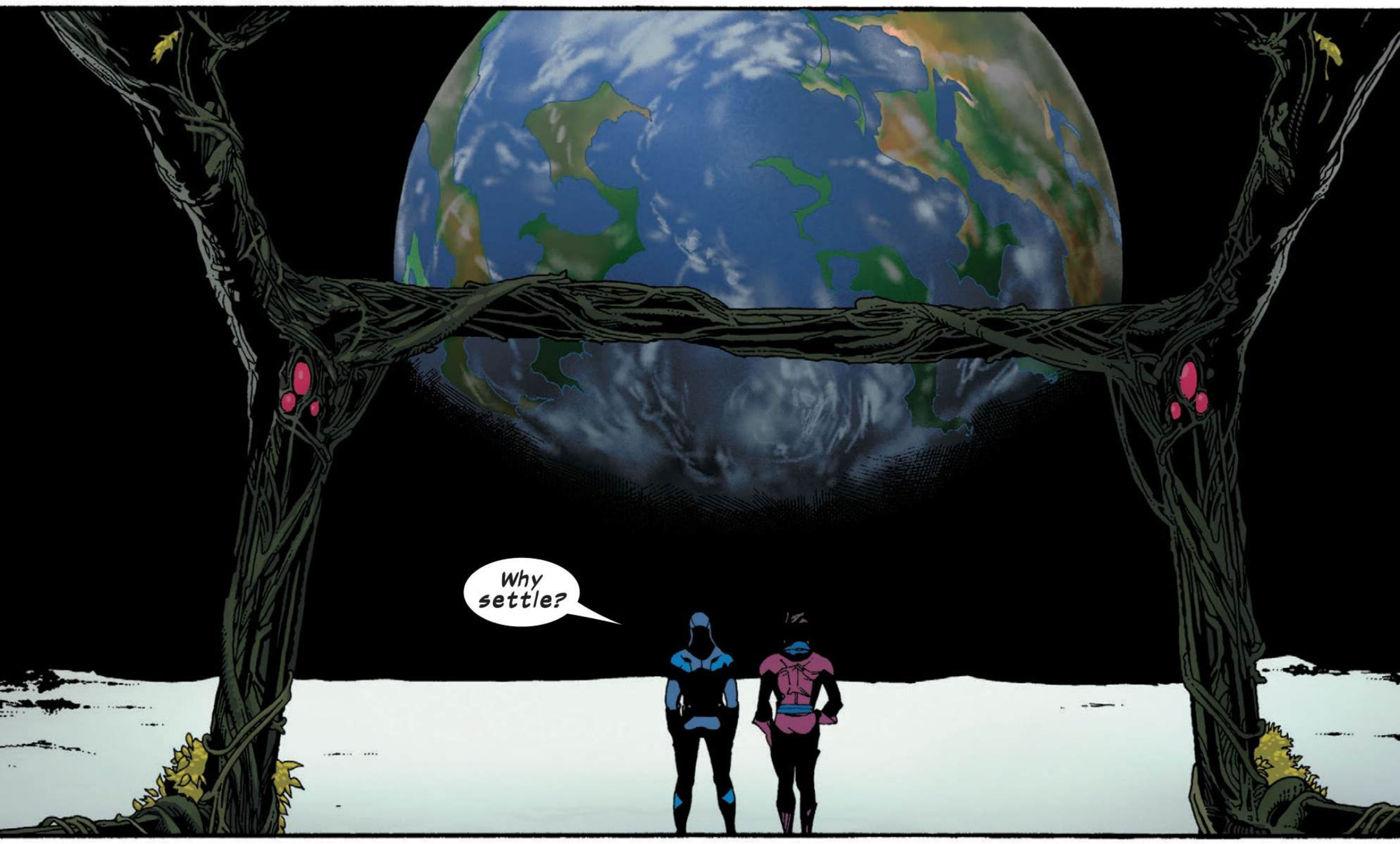

It's bad enough that Doctor Gregor remains... compromised...
...and that so many died...


"...but losing you would have made this whole experiment pointless."


The Summer House.
Mutant Habitat.
Son.

Oh, hey, Dad.
Jean asked me to come find you. Dinner's almost ready.

When we all got to Krakoa, someone asked me where I wanted to live.
I didn't really worry about it at first--*we just hung out under the stars...happy to soak it all in*--but the more I thought about it, I really wanted a place with a view.
*I can tell.*
We can grow Krakoan habitats anywhere, Dad, and they all link back to the main island. *So I figured, well...*


*Why settle?*

Want to explain what you're doing?

Inside this device an *inferno* burns.
That fire matches the one *inside* of me.

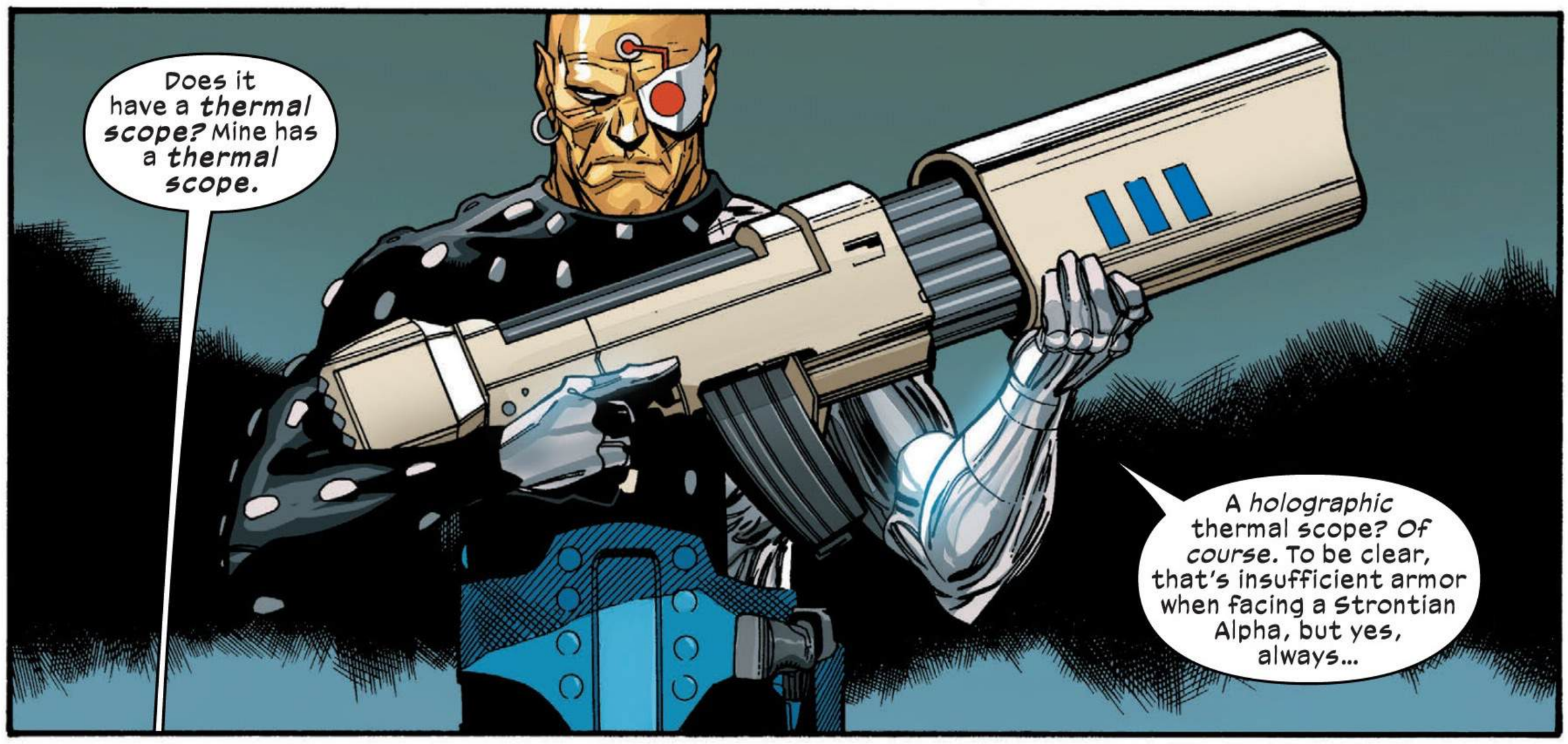
Do you see? I was born for such things, and I will not stop until these all-consuming flames have--
Yeah, you're not listening...
I want my steak *rare*.

You put the meat on the fire and expect, *what*, the *fire* not to *be fire*?

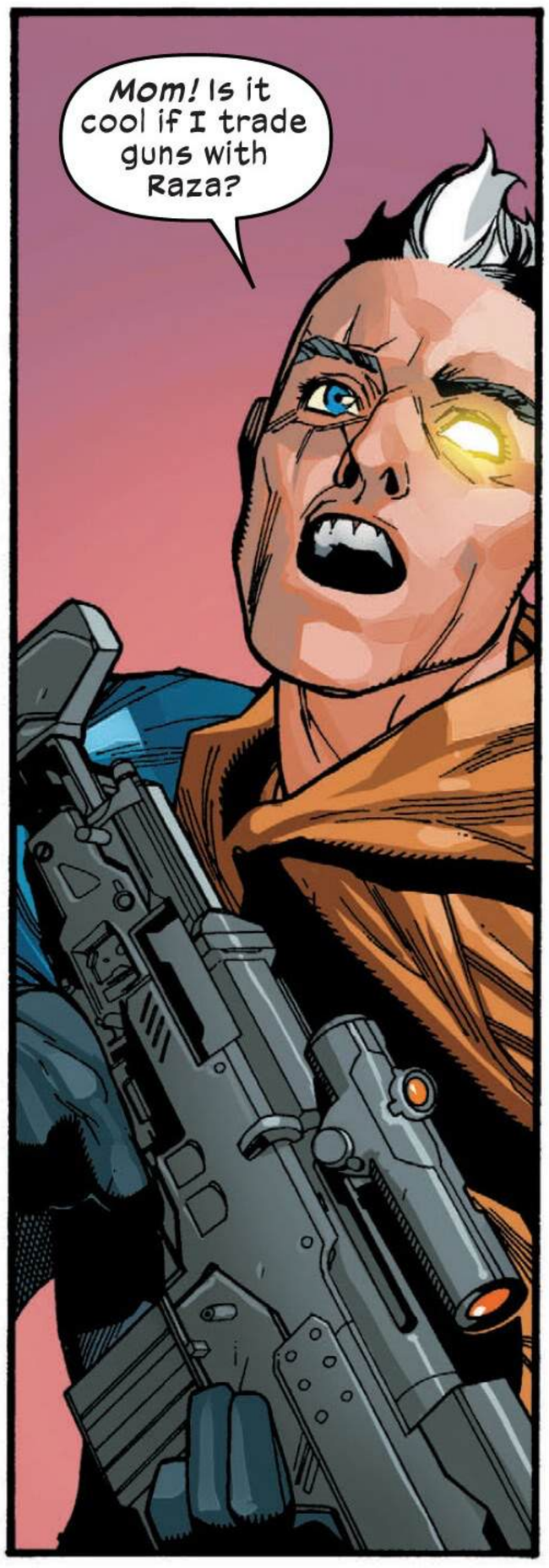
I'm going to fight you.

*Peace, warrior.* Because you are *valiant* and have earned my *respect*...
...I will give you your steak *rare*.
*Thank you.*

WOOOSH
*Medium rare.*
You sonofa--


Does it have a *thermal scope?* Mine has a *thermal scope.*
A *holographic* thermal scope? *Of course.* To be clear, that's insufficient armor when facing a Strontian Alpha, but yes, always...

Here, *however,* is the real shimmer in the celestial eye: It has *antimatter rounds.*
*Oh my god...I have to have it.*


*Mom!* Is it cool if I trade guns with Raza?

Set the table first, dear.

*Oofff!*

I made tea.
But I believe it needs sugar.
Of course it does.
Thank you, Ch'od.

So...
A question have I.

Hmmm?

All your clothes, spikes on them have they, or a special occasion is this?

Yes.

Then another hard drink for another hard girl I am getting.
Sure, but not the purple stuff.

Hey. Just in time. Gabriel's almost done burning dinner.
Fantastic.

Did you give your dad his present?
What's this?
I hadn't said anything yet, but I guess we're doing that now...
Hey, Alex! You got the thing?

Yes, I do. Here you go, old man.

It's nice. It's a plant. A flower.
Okay, I don't get it.

It's a Krakoan gate, Dad. Linked with one that we have here in the house.
All you need to do is plant it in the Starjammer's arboretum and--no matter where you are in the universe--you'll always be just a short walk away.

Well, then...
I love it.

It's good to see you, Dad.
Okay, Gabe. He gets it.
Yes, Father. Your visit warms my heart. Which, already aflame, is like pouring heat upon heat. It's the fire of one thousand suns. The--
I'm only like this because I grew up without a strong male role model.

All right. It's been a good day.
The first of many. Let's eat.

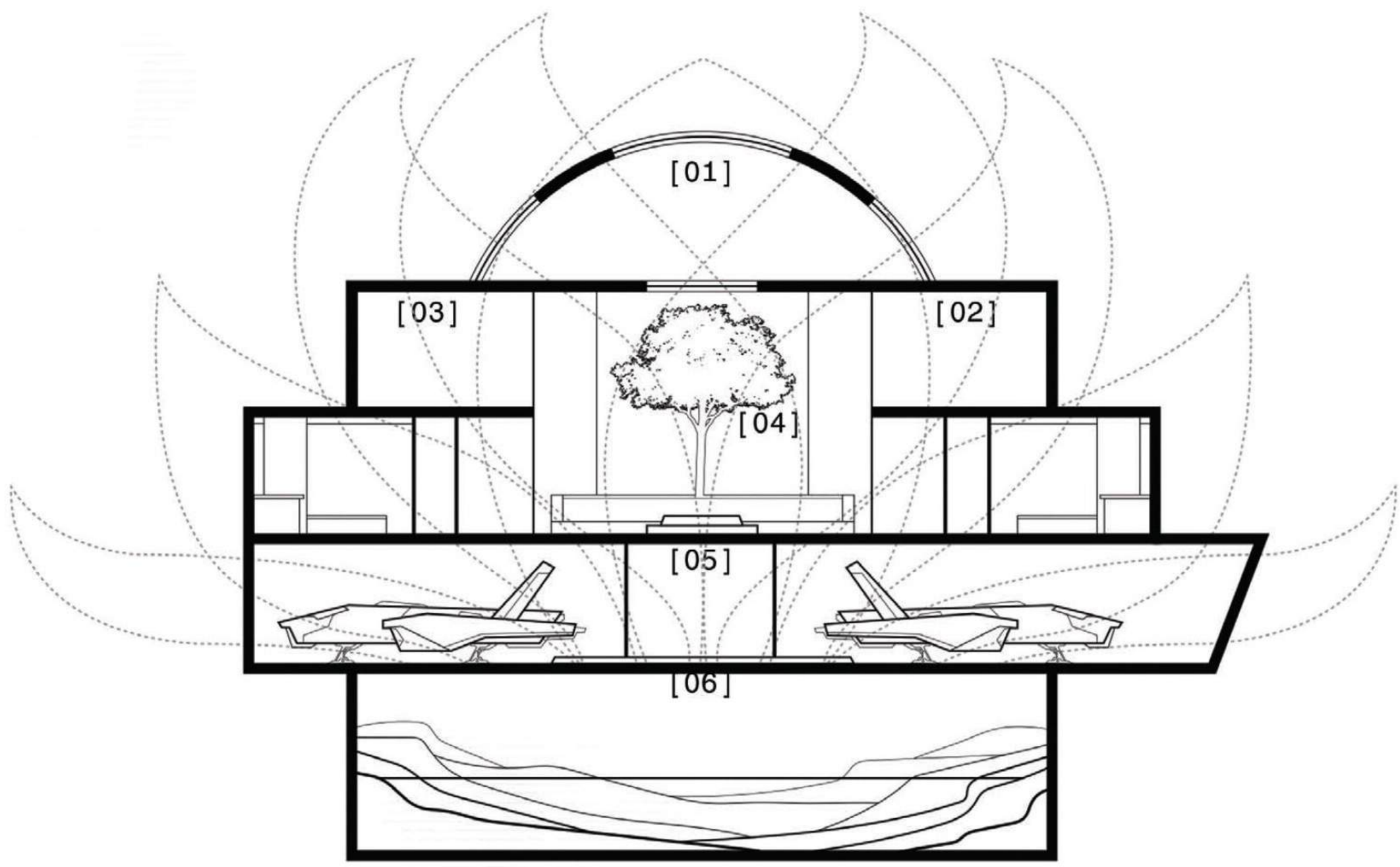
[Summ....[001]_01]
[Hous....[001]_00]

# SUMMER HOUSE

## THE BLUE AREA OF THE MOON

The Summer House is a Krakoan biome located adjacent to the Blue Area of the moon. Occupied by the Summers clan and other mutant allies, the base also serves as a departure point for first response / first strike capabilities.

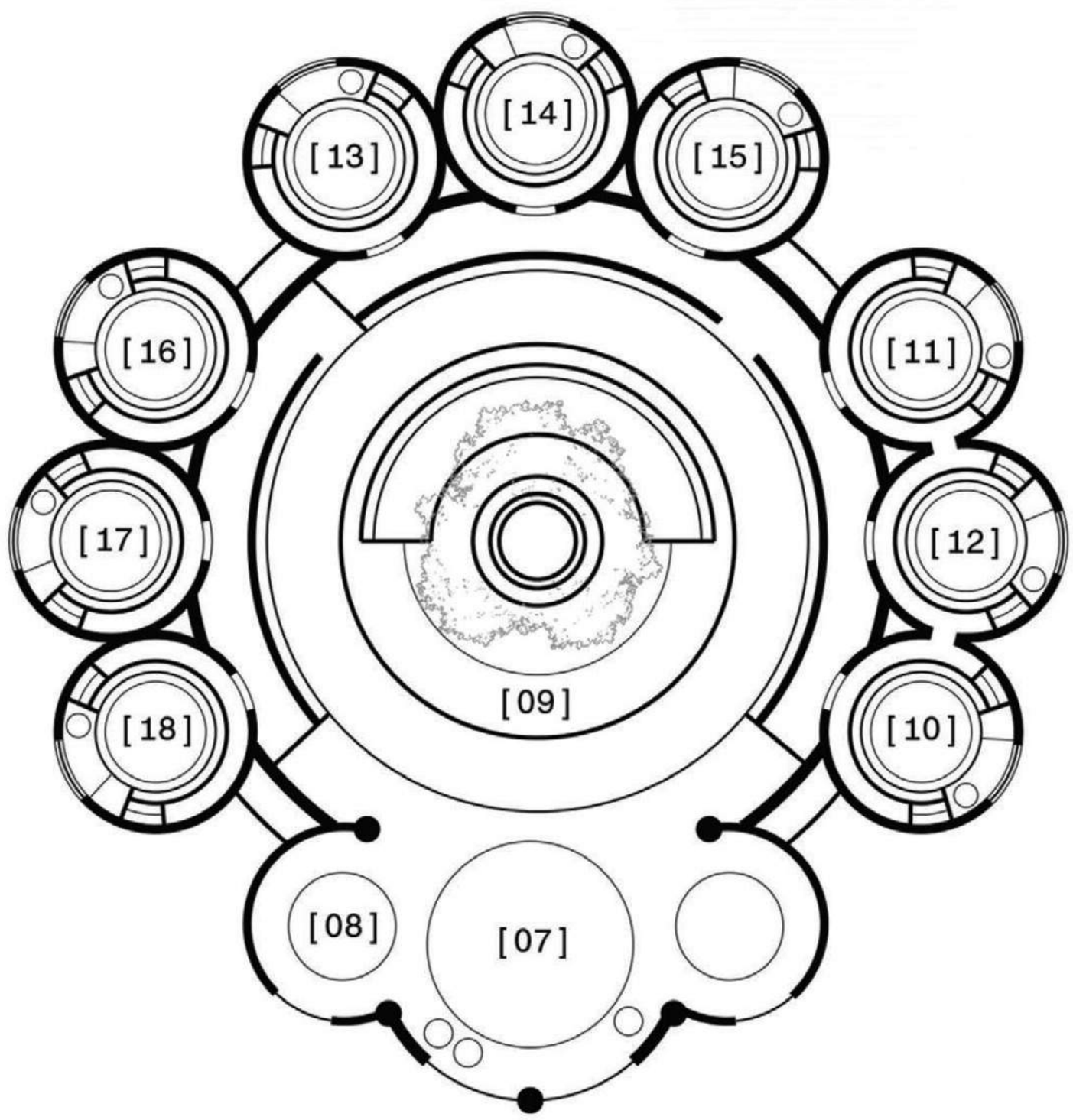
**NOTE: While all mutants are technically welcome, Vulcan has been bringing home quite a few acquaintances from the Krakoan mainland who have stretched the acceptable bounds of decorum.**




## ELEVATION

[01].....Observation
[02].....Tactical ops
[03].....Gymnasium
[04].....Central living / dining / sleeping area
[05].....Hangar / turnabout
[06].....Sublunar biome / pool / gateway access

# SUMMER HOUSE



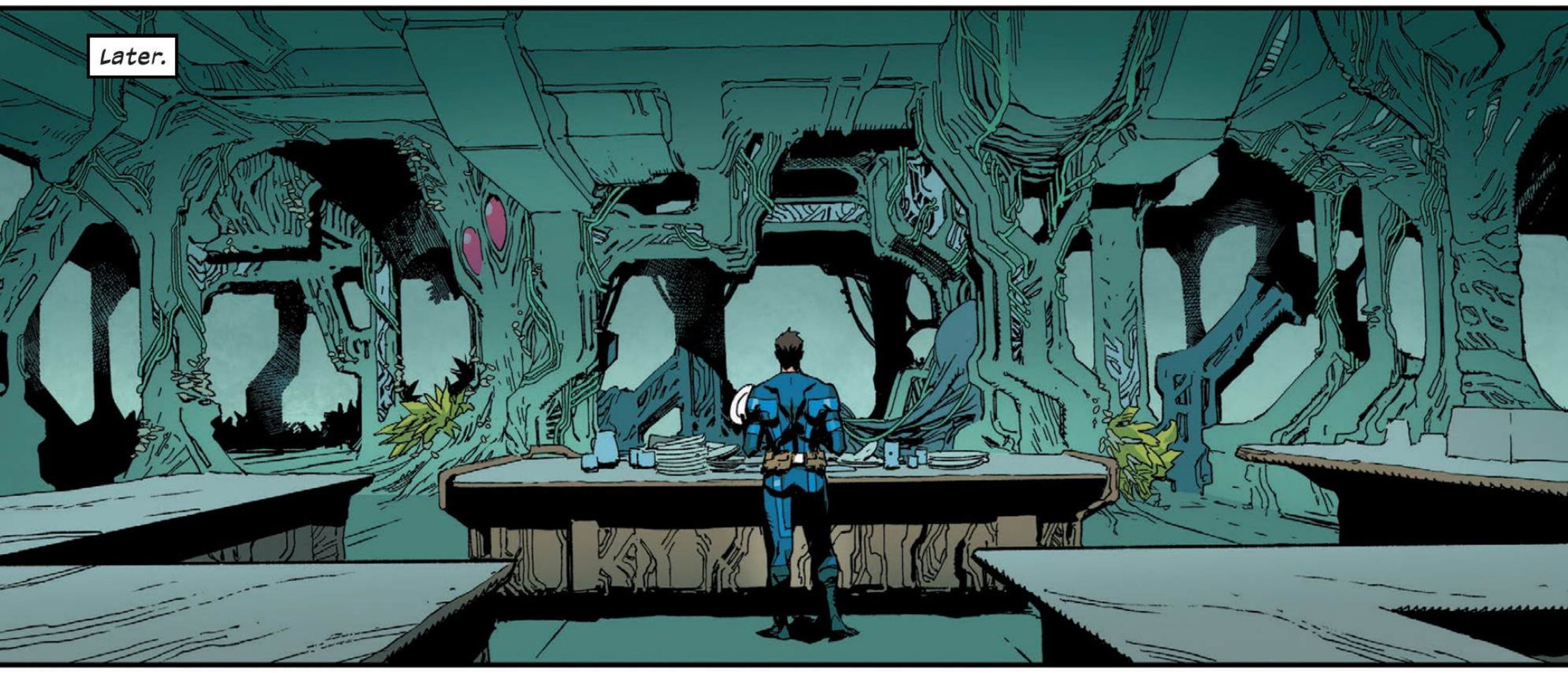

## FLOOR PLAN

[07].....Kitchen
[08].....Dining
[09].....Living area

[10].....Cyclops' Room
[11].....Wolverine's Room
[12].....Jean's Room

[13].....Vulcan's Room
[14].....Havok's Room
[15].....Empty

[16].....Cable's Room
[17].....Empty
[18].....Rachel's Room


Later.

Got stuck doing the dishes, *huh?*
It's my night.

Well, move over. You *wash* and I'll *dry*.
Actually, that's not how it works.

I just spray this Krakoan goo all over them and it eats all the bacteria and waste...
Then, when it converts that into various elemental gases, it just evaporates, leaving behind clean plates.

Son, that's disgusting. I think I'm going to vomit.
***No.*** *Disgusting* was when Krakoa tried to grow us edible plates that also "improved" what it considered to be abnormal biological functions.
*The plates and the goo were a compromise.*

*My boy...your world has* ***changed.***
Yes, it has.
And for the ***better.***

Well, forgive my simpleminded *human* observation...
Dad.
No, listen. You've always lived a dangerous life. And it's cost you over the years.

But what you are doing... it feels even more dangerous.
*I'm worried about you and your brothers.*

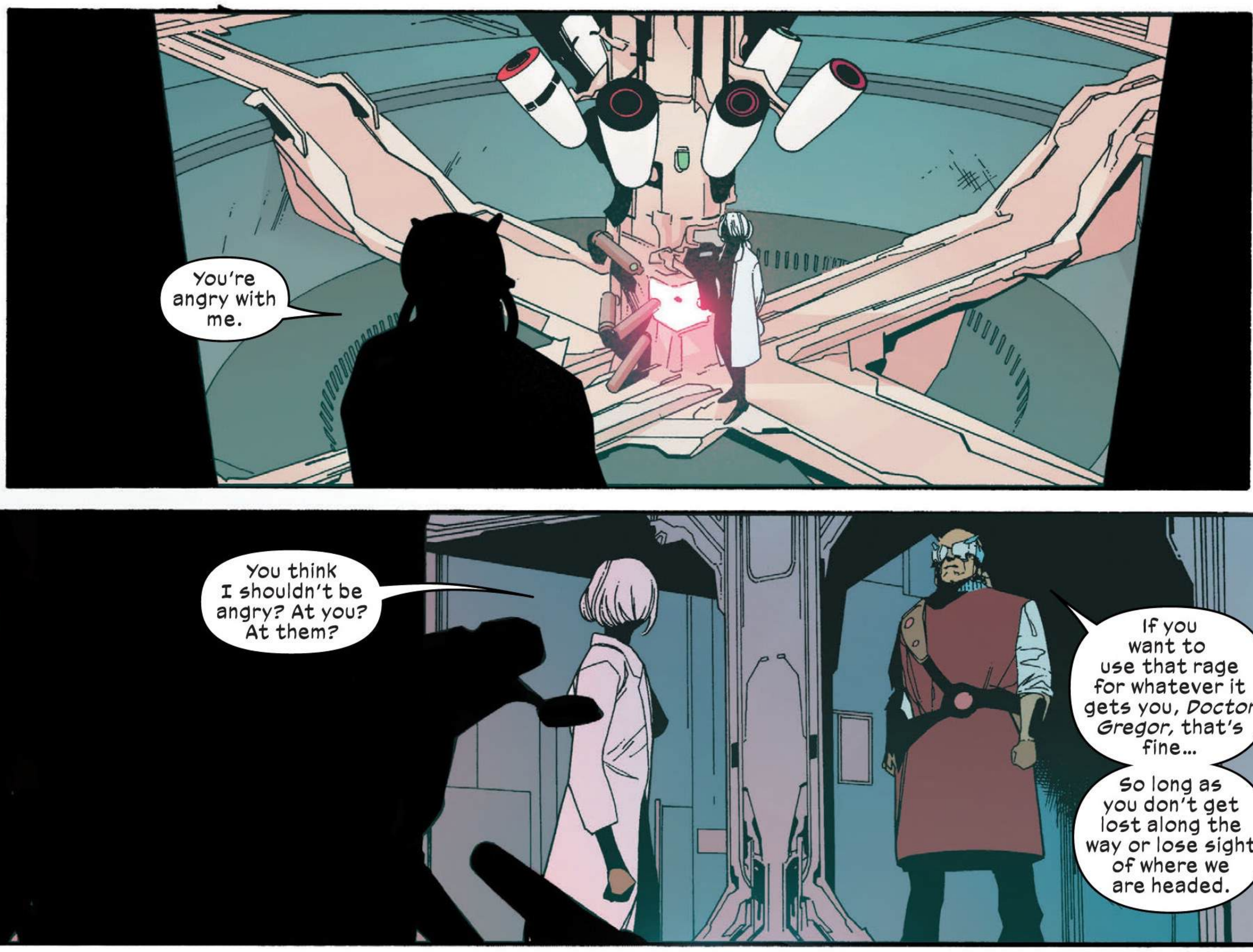
Here's the thing I've figured out, Dad.
There's no end to the number of things on Earth--*or, hell, out there in the universe*--that want to kill us.

They never stop coming--they never will. We're all the same that way.
*So, sure, I'm a fighter--I will never stop fighting for what I believe in...*

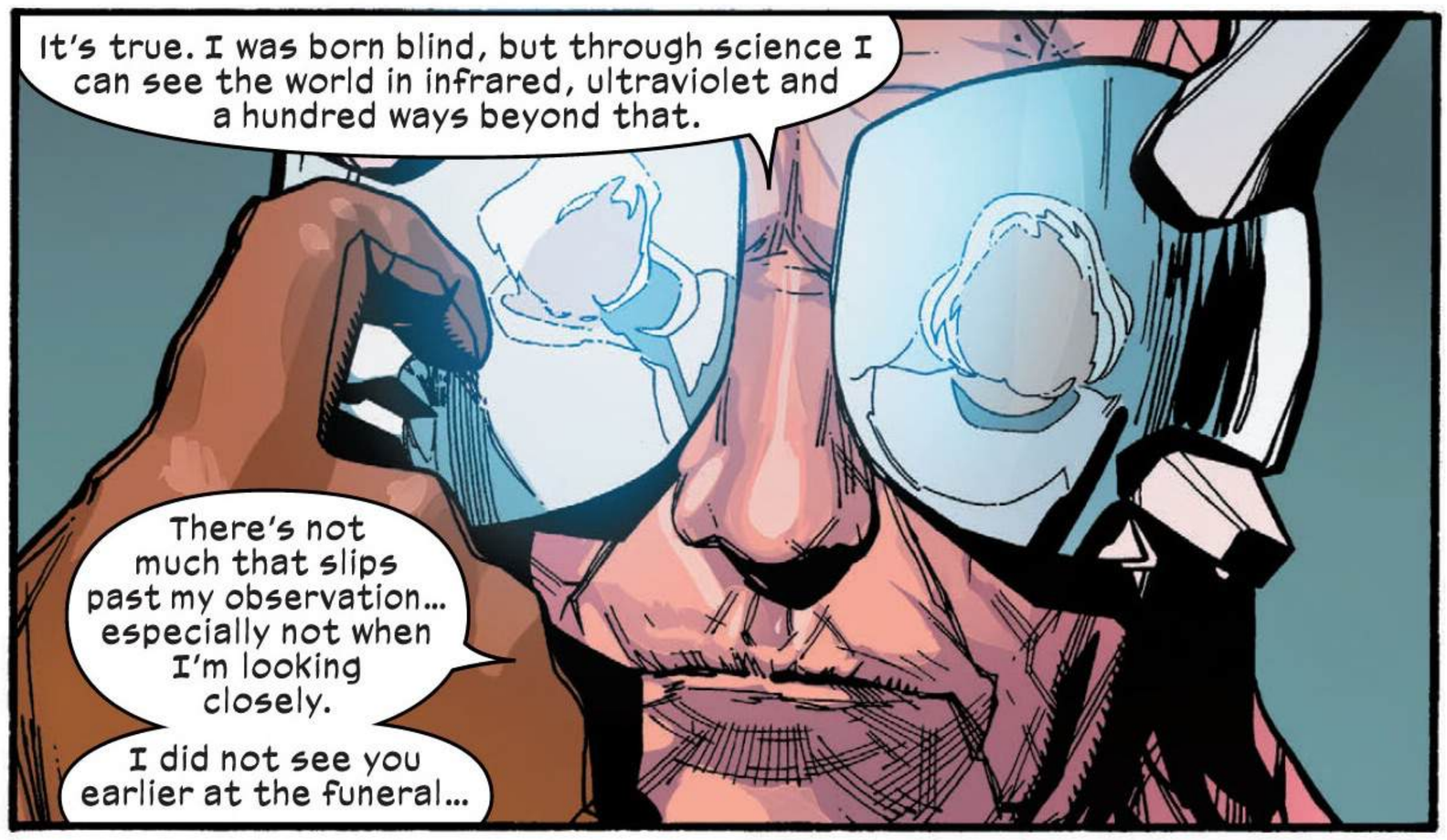
...but I also live here, surrounded by the people I love.
So I'm done focusing on the things that want me dead--and I'm choosing to spend my days focused on the things that make me want to live.
Okay?

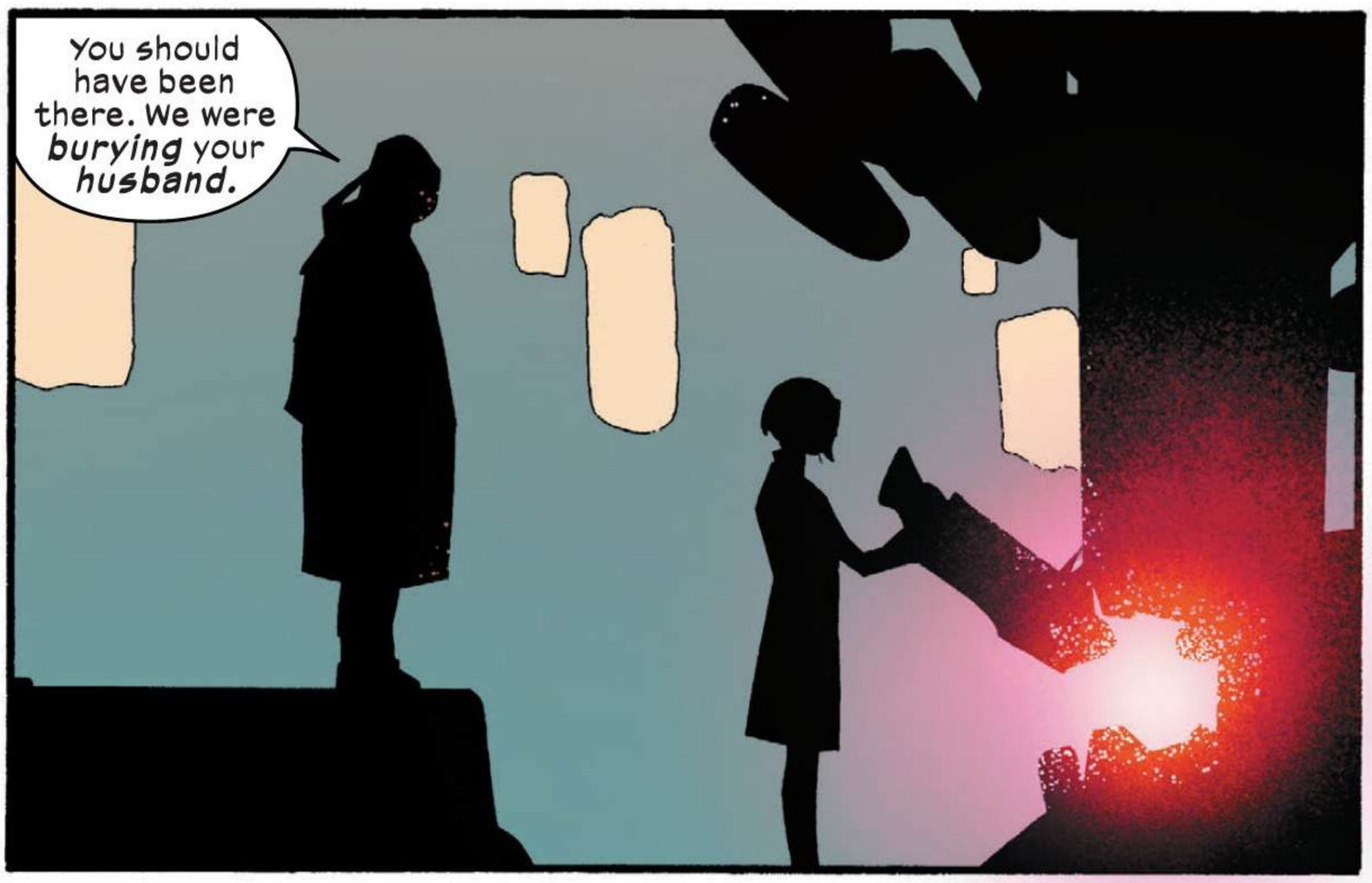
Okay.
You're a good boy.

The Orchis Forge.
I had heard you'd arrived.
First out, last in, always a soft bed for the man behind the curtain.


You're angry with me.
You think I shouldn't be angry? At you? At them?
If you want to use that rage for whatever it gets you, *Doctor Gregor*, that's fine...
So long as you don't get lost along the way or lose sight of where we are headed.

*Lose sight?*


It's true. I was born blind, but through science I can see the world in infrared, ultraviolet and a hundred ways beyond that.
There's not much that slips past my observation... especially not when I'm looking closely.
I did not see you earlier at the funeral...


You should have been there. We were *burying* your *husband.*

There wasn't enough left to bury, Killian...

And even if there were, it would have just been a shell. *Nothing more.*

What he was lives here...

...and here, in my work.

He was our best military mind. A great strategist and hunter...

A tower of a man. Memories are fine...legacy is better...but in losing him, we lost more than that.

*I know.*

But...*well,* I guess now is as good a time as any...

Would you like to know a *secret,* Director?

*What's that?*

*I know how to bring him back.*

GHO

# Summoner

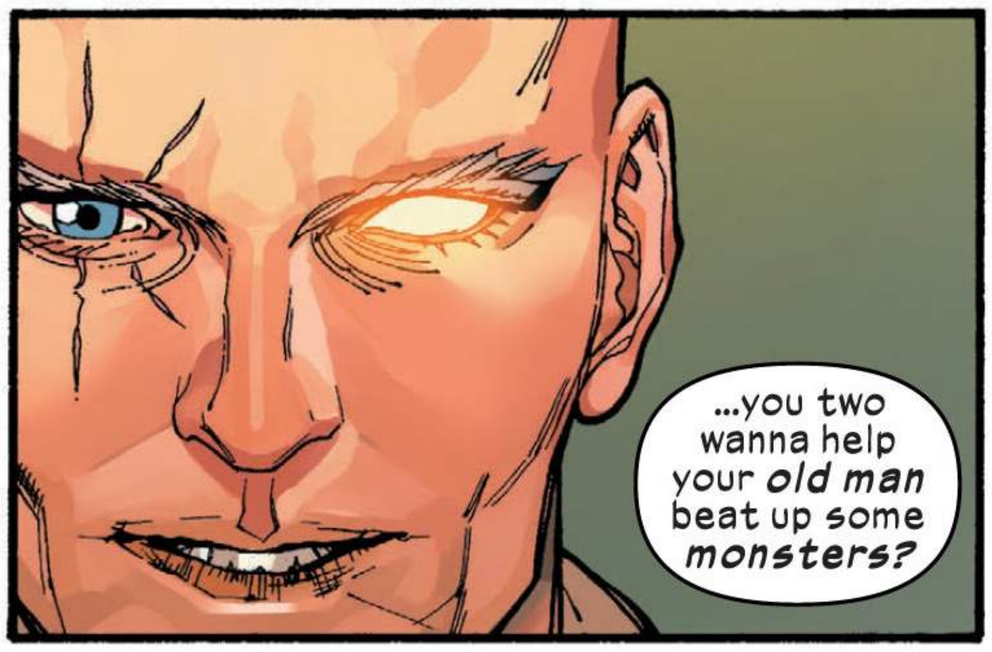
2

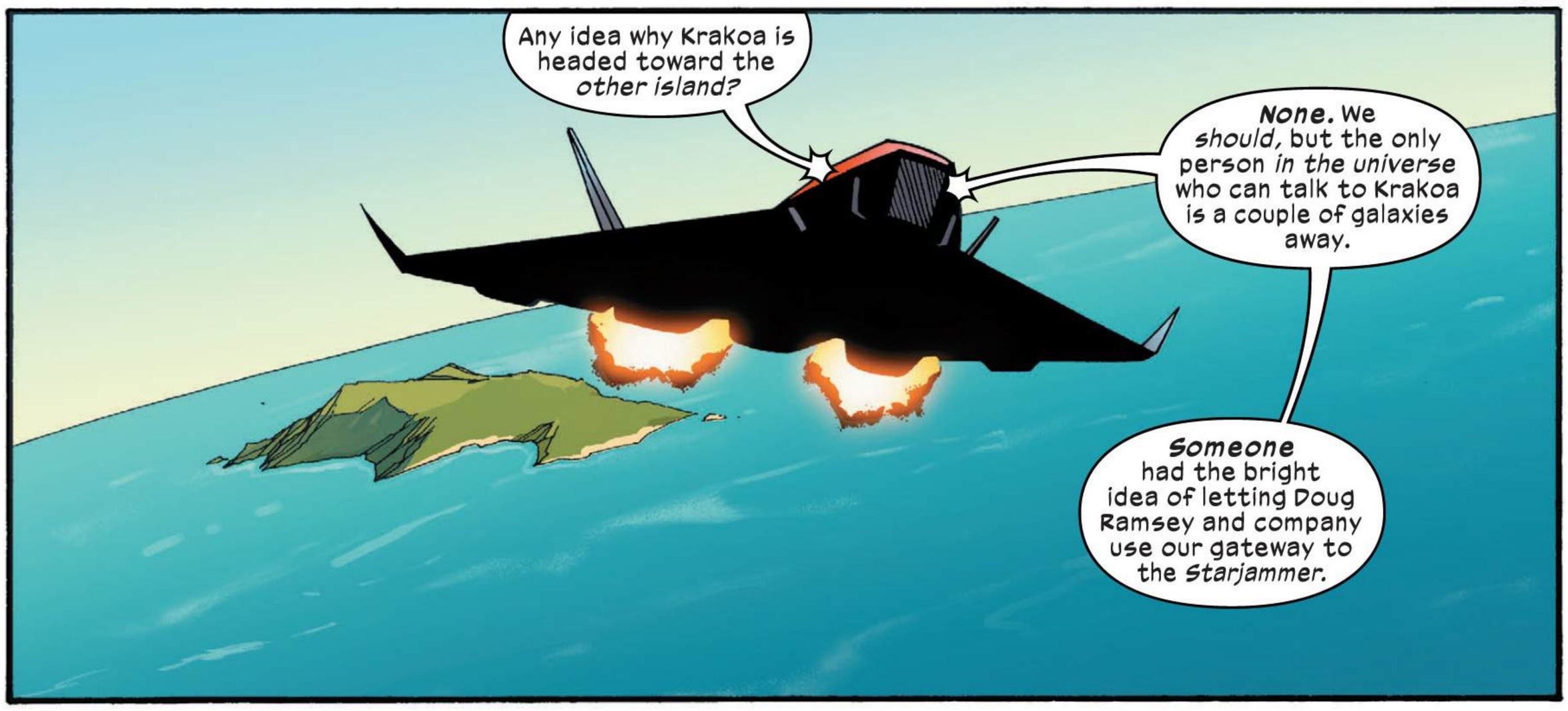
The Summer House.
Kids.

Hello, Father.
What's up, Dad?

**A lot.** Yesterday--*amid all the drama unfolding on Krakoa*--a ***second island*** appeared 100 miles off the southern coast of our ***sentient mutant homeland.***
No one knows *how* or *why*, but ***this island*** somehow got the attention of ***Krakoa itself,*** and now ***Krakoa*** is making a beeline for it.
Then--*about twenty minutes ago*--Aurora and Northstar returned from a flyover and reported the island appears to be full of hostiles--*giant beasts from that other place we don't normally speak of.*
So...

...I'm headed out on a ***recon mission,*** and I was *wondering...*

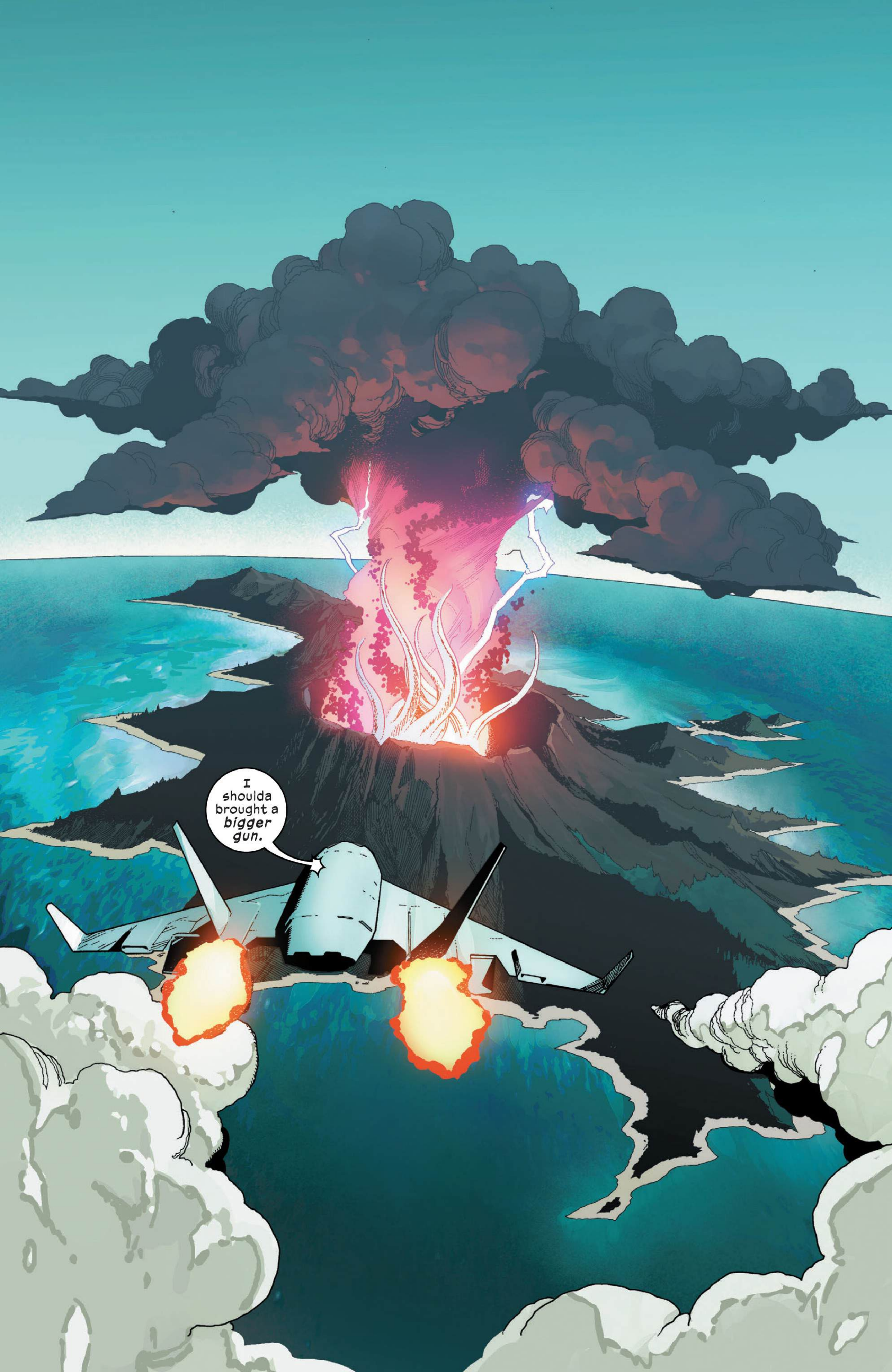

...you two wanna help your ***old man*** beat up some ***monsters?***

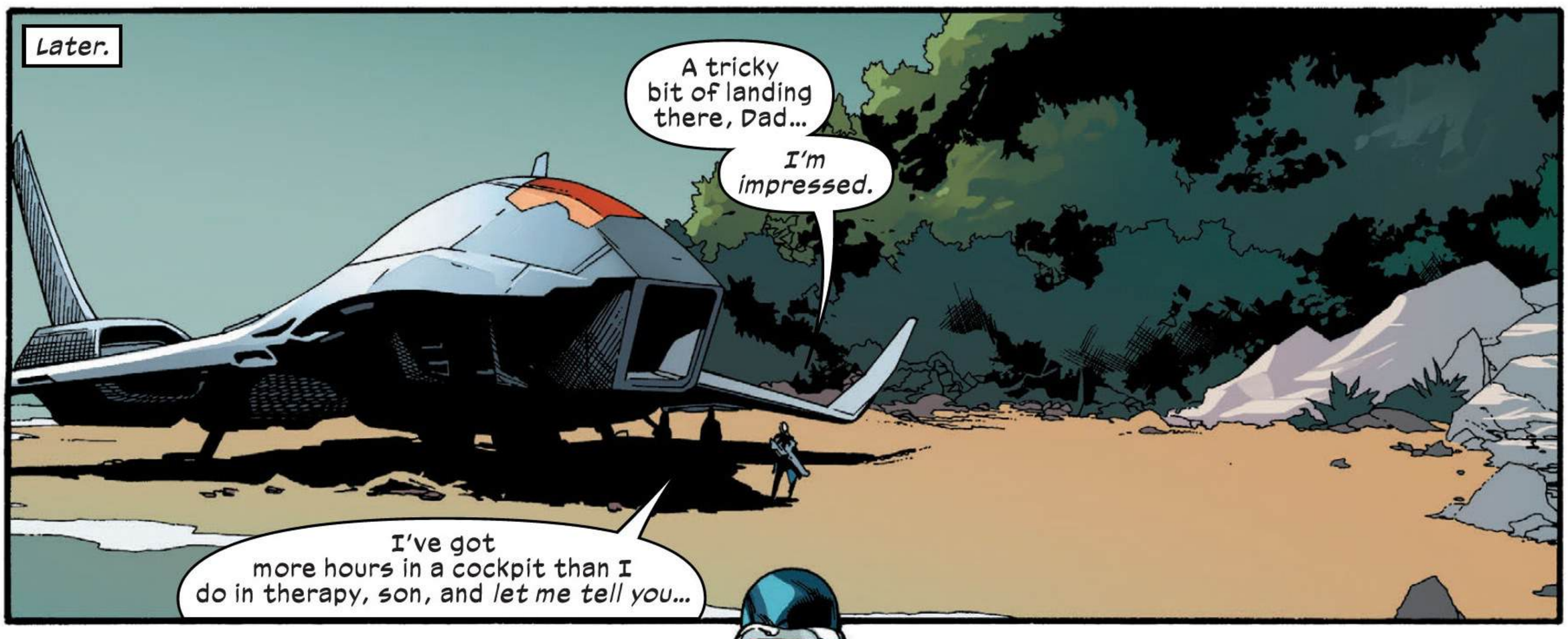

Any idea why Krakoa is headed toward the *other island?*
***None.*** We *should,* but the only person *in the universe* who can talk to Krakoa is a couple of galaxies away.
***Someone*** had the bright idea of letting Doug Ramsey and company use our gateway to the *Starjammer.*

It was you, *wasn't it?*
This is the voice of a guilty man, Rachel. *Throw the book at me.*

***Hey!*** So, I brought about a couple hundred rounds for my pistol. *Standard issue.*
A couple thousand for the rifle I got from Raza--*which is a lovely bit of business*--along with the thermal grenades I'm packing...

...which sounds like it should be ***fine...***but now I'm wondering if I should have brought ***anything else.***
*Yeah... okay...*
*Well, son...* take a look for yourself.

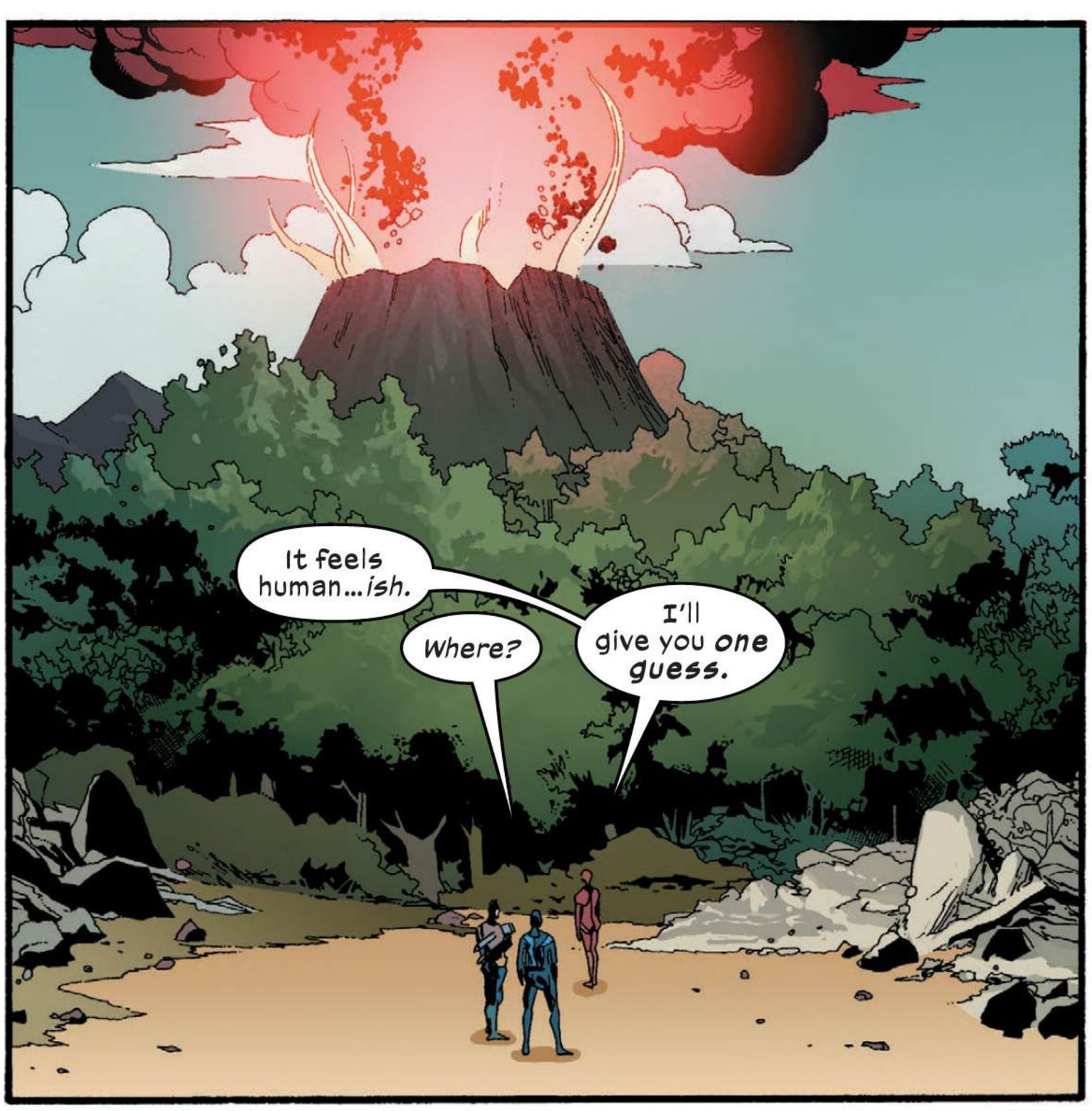

I shoulda brought a bigger gun.

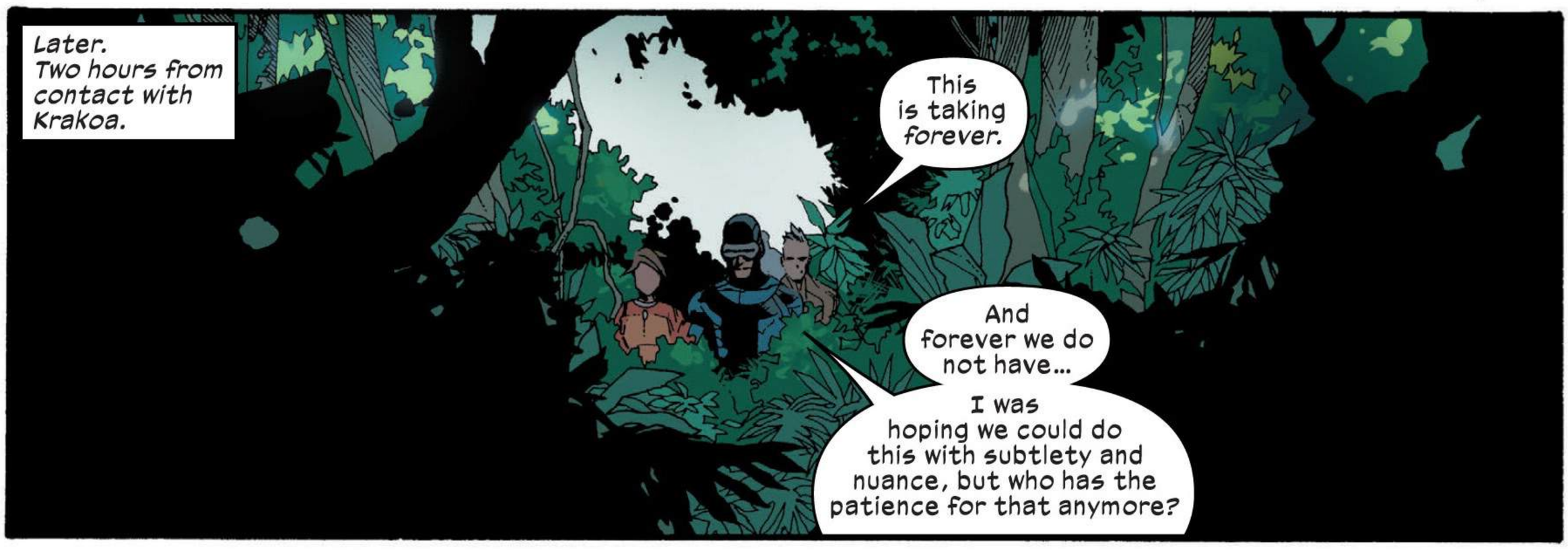

Later.
A tricky bit of landing there, Dad...
I'm impressed.
I've got more hours in a cockpit than I do in therapy, son, and *let me tell you...*

...I have *done the work.*
*All right.* At Krakoa's current speed, it'll be here in around five hours, which means we've got a good bit less than that to figure out what's going on here...
Rachel, if you don't mind.

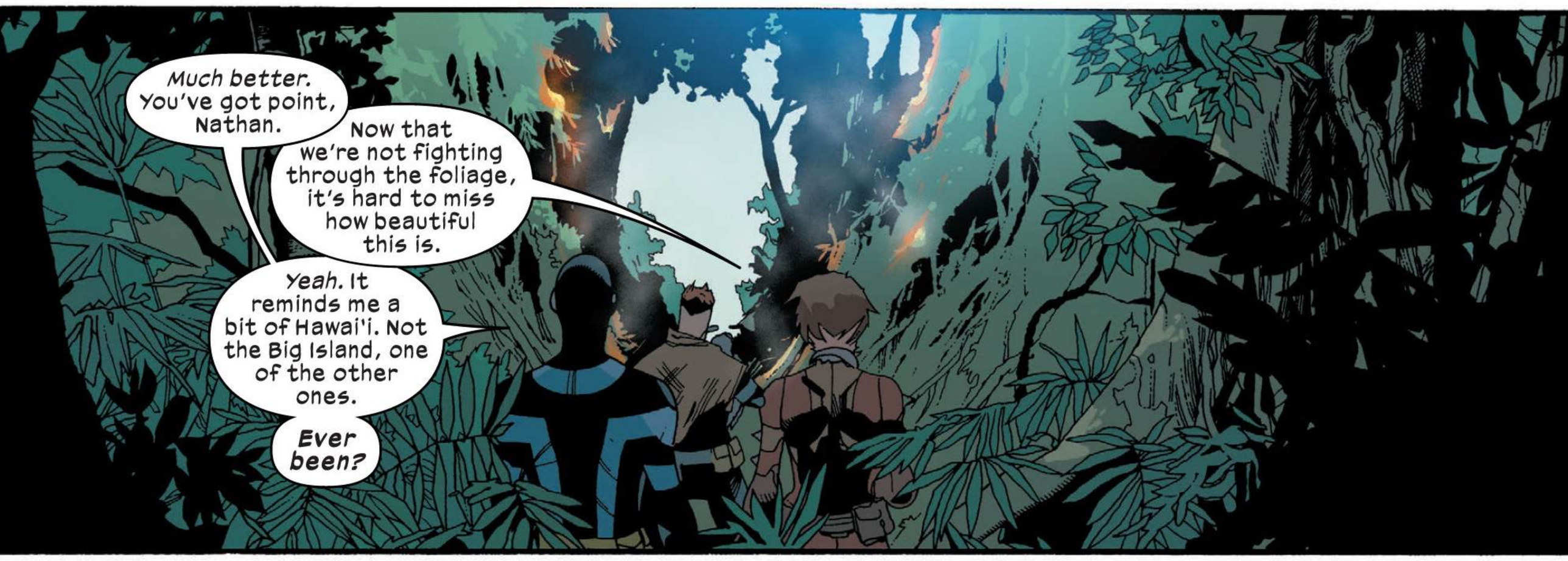
*On it.*
*Oh,* that's interesting...

It's dense, but most of what's out there is of low intelligence-- ***wildlife.***
However-- *and it's tough to tell exactly because it's all a little...off--* I am picking up something higher on the food chain.


It feels human...*ish.*
*Where?*
I'll give you ***one guess.***


Later.
Two hours from contact with Krakoa.
This is taking forever.
And forever we do not have...
I was hoping we could do this with subtlety and nuance, but who has the patience for that anymore?

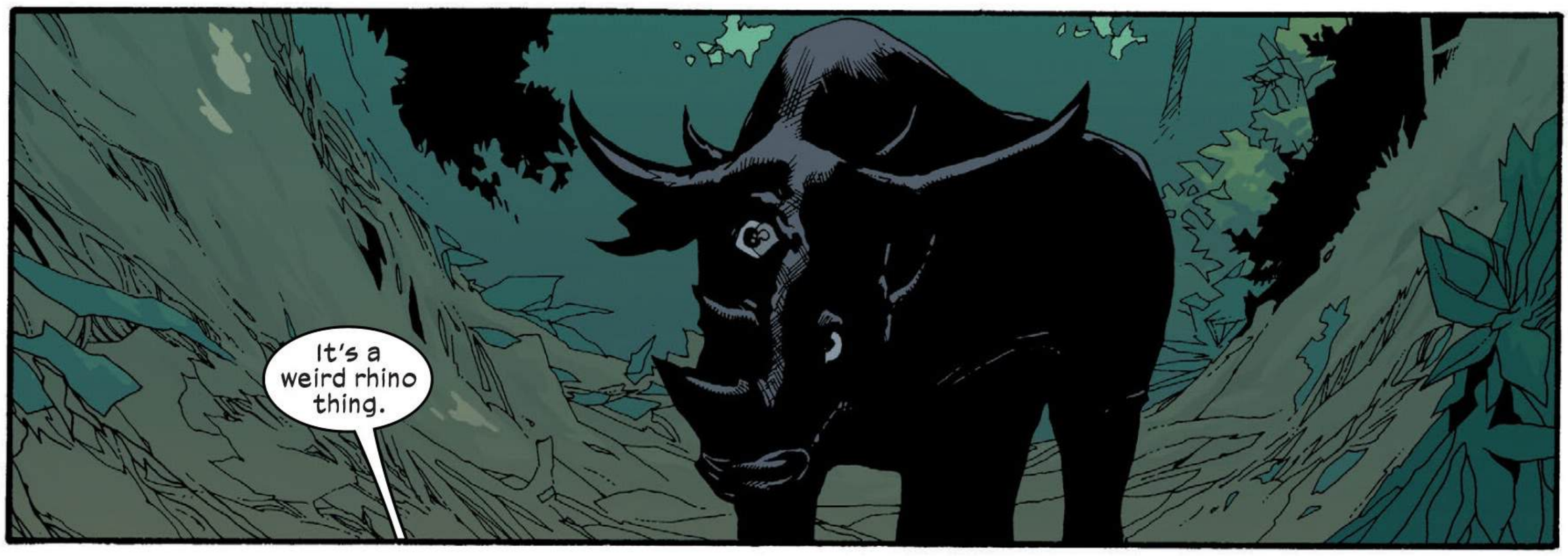
Stay behind me.

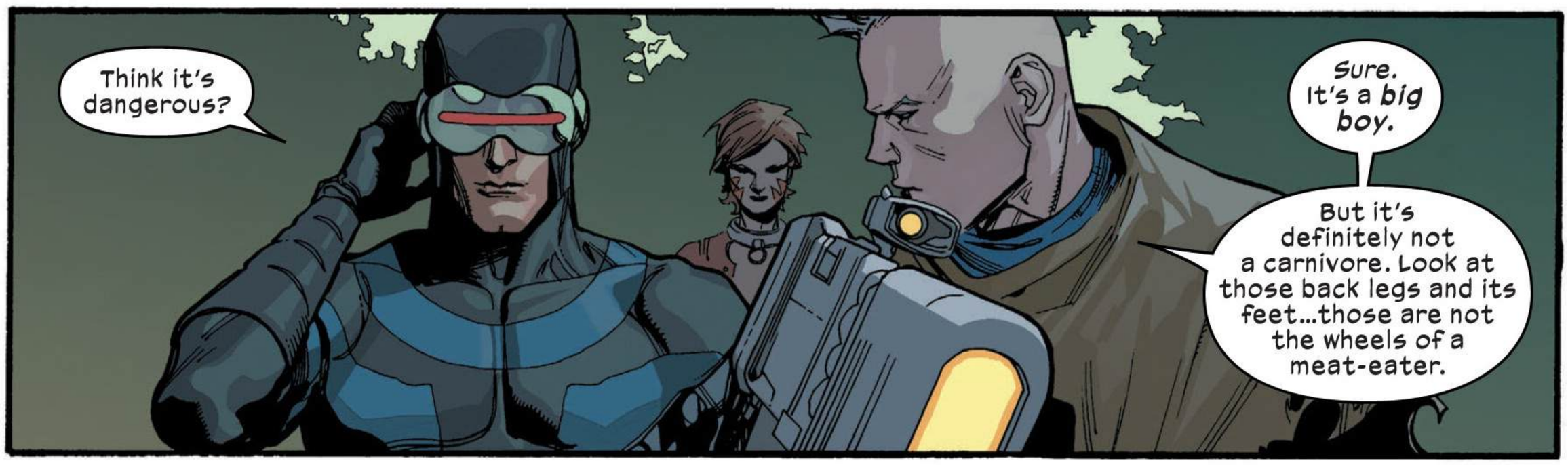

Much better. You've got point, Nathan.
Now that we're not fighting through the foliage, it's hard to miss how beautiful this is.
Yeah. It reminds me a bit of Hawai'i. Not the Big Island, one of the other ones.
Ever been?

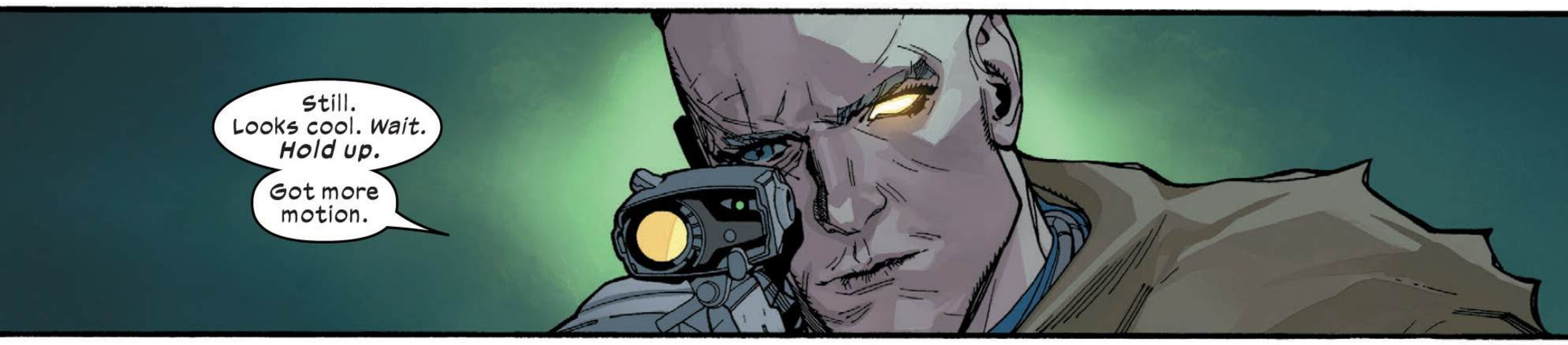
Once, but, you know, world-ending, fighting for my life...
All that.
That's no way to experience paradise, Rachel. You'll have to give it another shot.
You know what... why don't I take you?
Really?
Of course. But now that I'm thinking about it, I might know a better place.

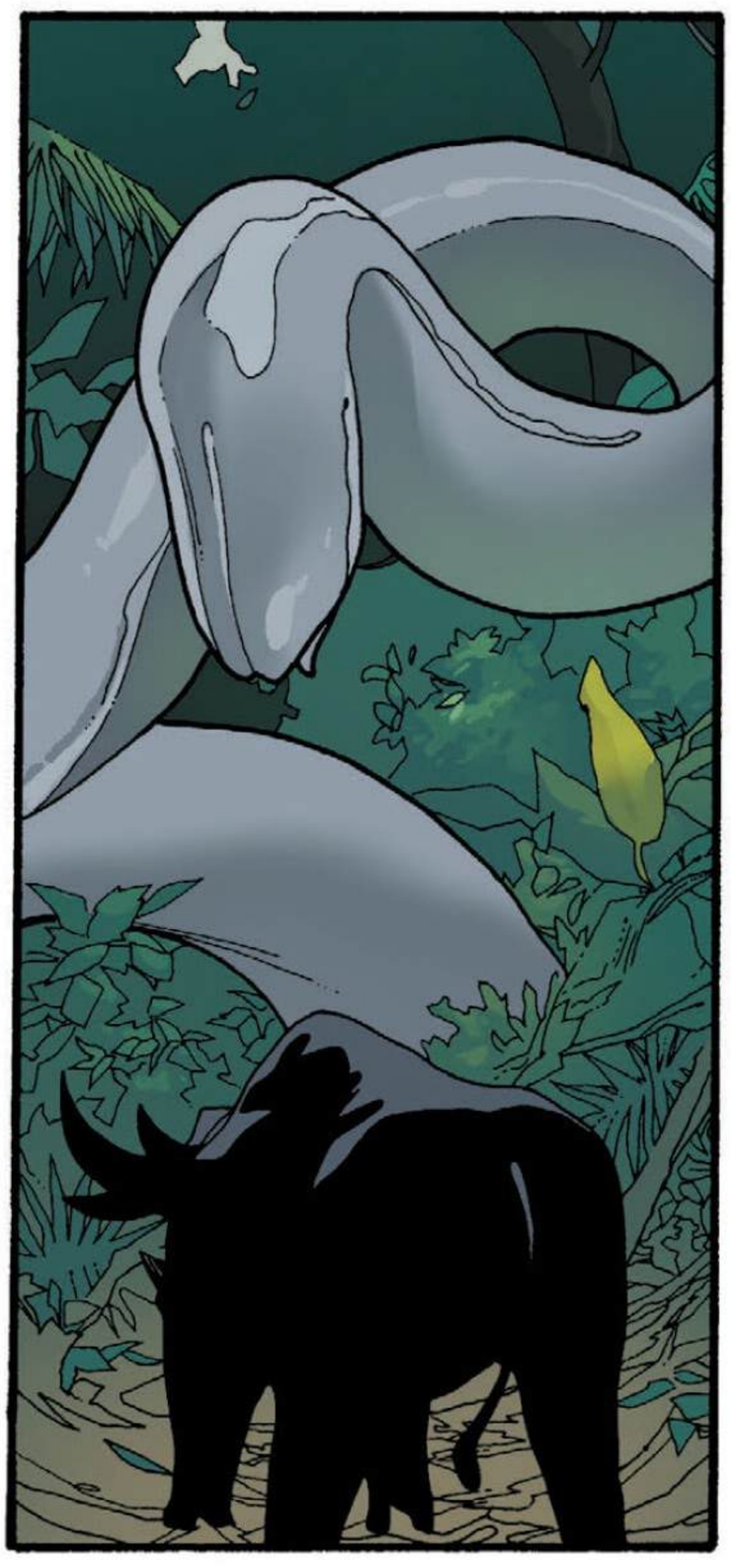
There's a little island on Chandilar--an Imperial preserve--where the water is so clear you can see a couple hundred yards down, and at night--*because most of the sea life is bioluminescent*--it feels like the island is suspended in a sea of stars.
Well. That sounds amazing.
Put it on your calendar, kiddo. We're going.

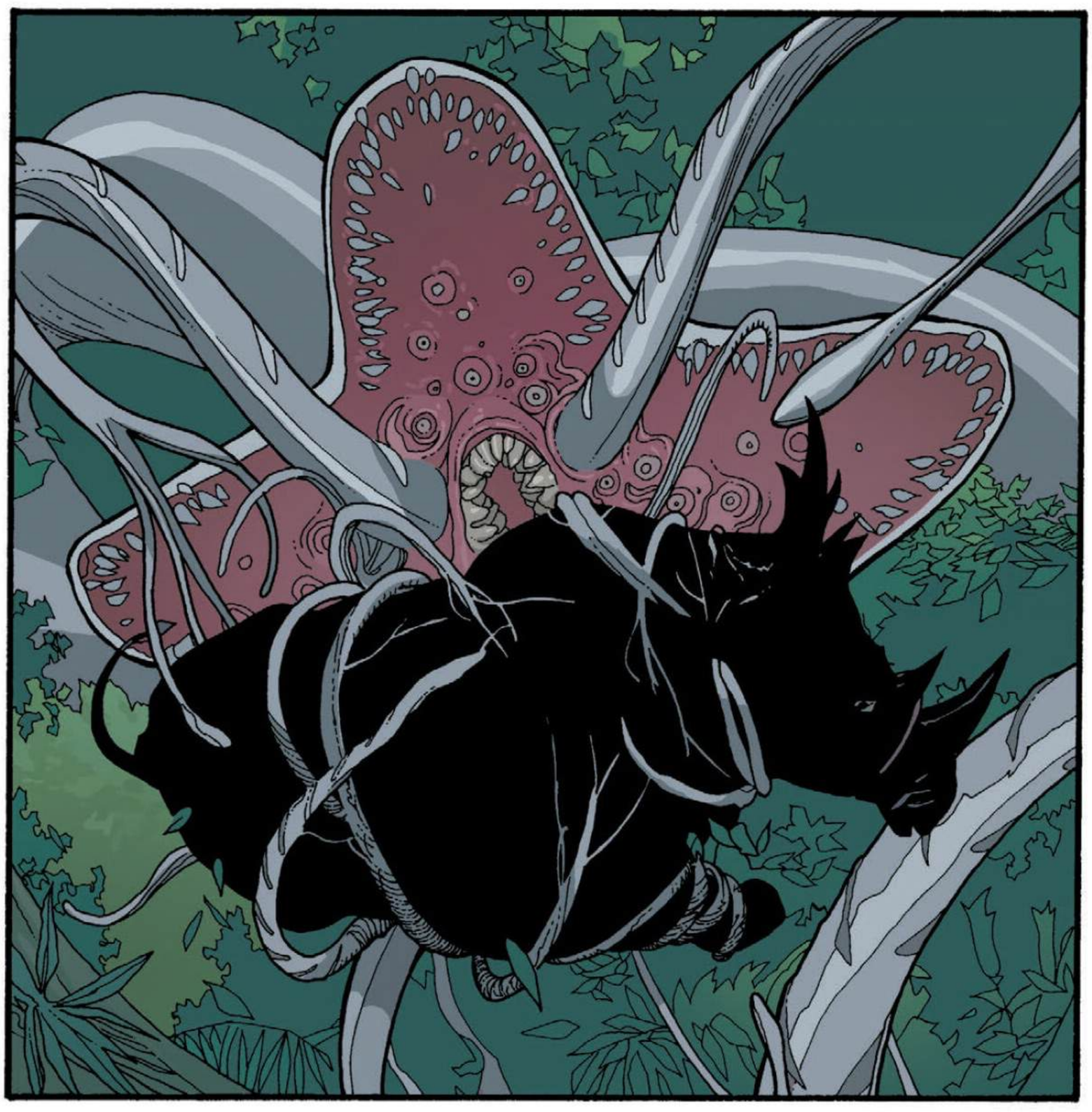
Hey!
Got something.

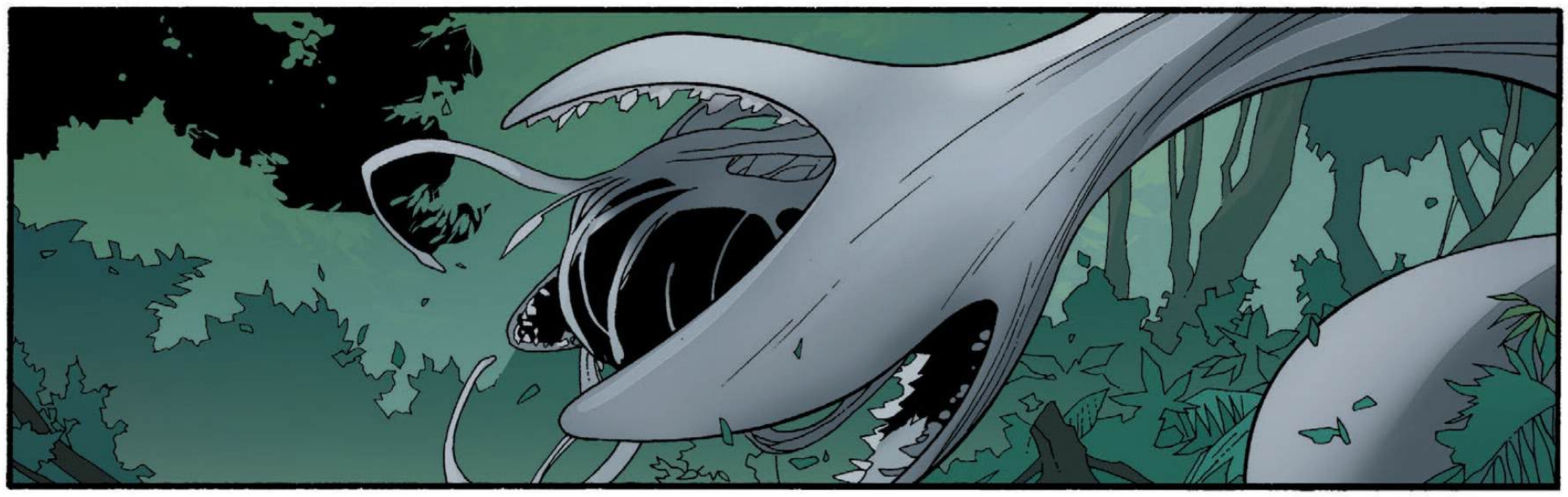

It's a weird rhino thing.


Think it's dangerous?
Sure. It's a big boy.
But it's definitely not a carnivore. Look at those back legs and its feet...those are not the wheels of a meat-eater.


Still. Looks cool. Wait. Hold up.
Got more motion.



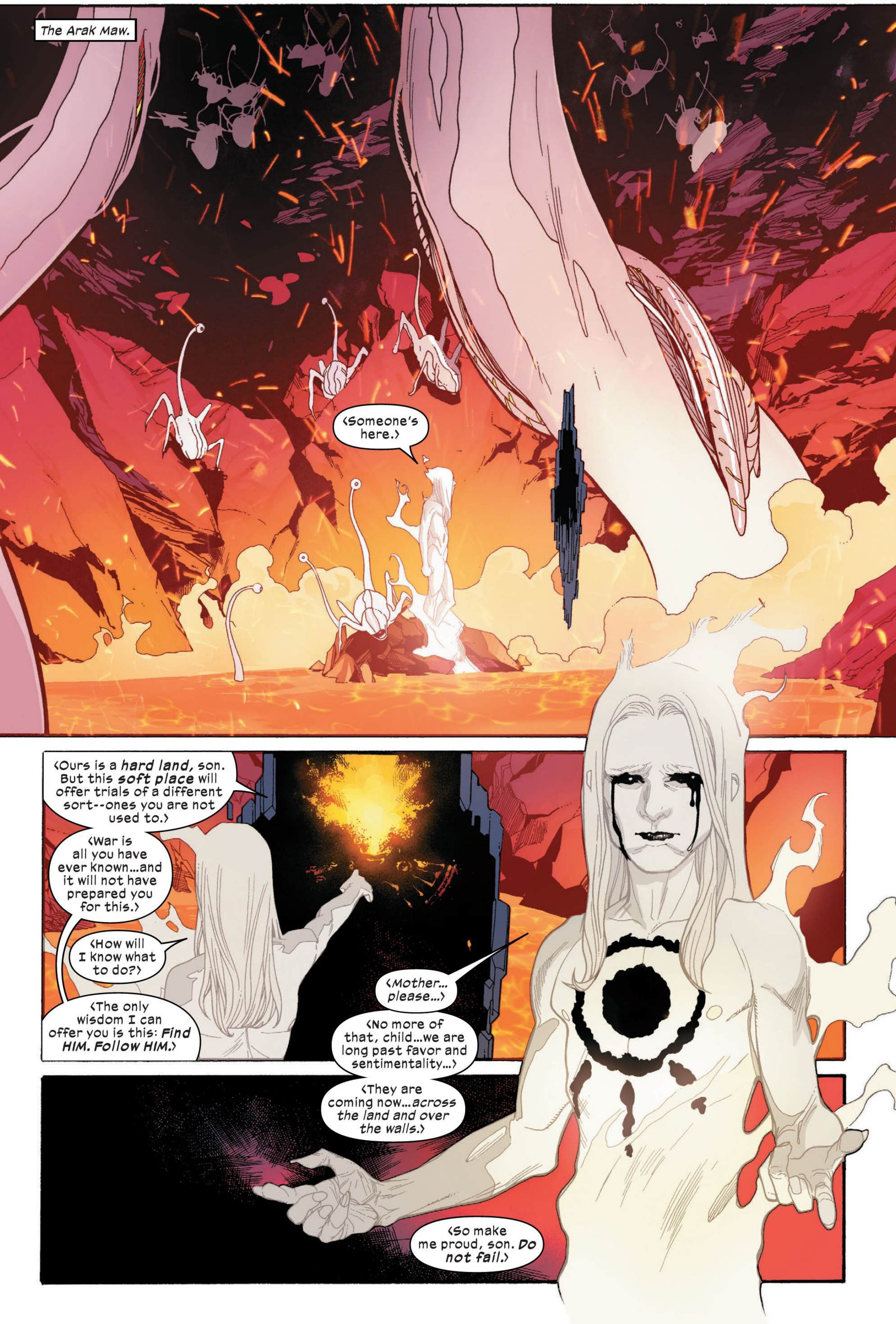


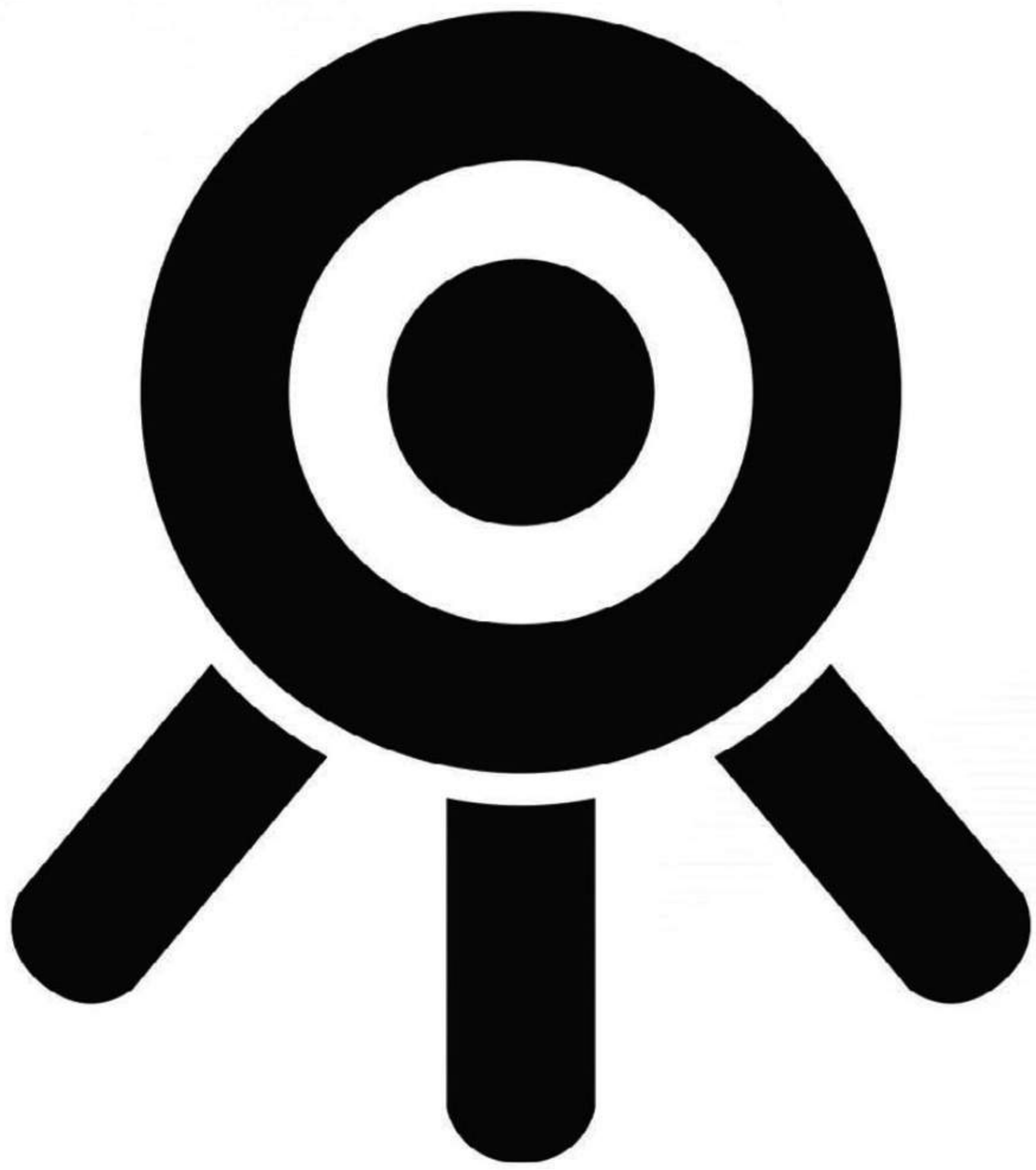


Damn.
Gross.

Okay...now that's a meat-eater.
Yes, it is.
Father? Should we...
I don't think we're gonna have a choice...

FIRE!


The Arak Maw.
‹Someone's here.›
‹Ours is a *hard land,* son. But this *soft place* will offer trials of a different sort--ones you are not used to.›
‹War is all you have ever known...and it will not have prepared you for this.›
‹How will I know what to do?›
‹The only wisdom I can offer you is this: *Find HIM. Follow HIM.*›
‹*Mother... please...*›
‹No more of that, child...we are long past favor and sentimentality...›
‹They are coming now...*across the land and over the walls.*›
‹So make me proud, son. *Do not fail.*›



# UNDER THIS SIGN, A SUMMONER

Nameless and ageless, a Summoner of Arakko can bridge the chasm between the lost island of Arakko and the land beyond the wild borders of Otherworld.

Able to control the dark beasts that serve the adversaries of Arakko, for millennia Summoners have served as the greatest deterrent to Arakko's eternal enemies. However, in recent years, their numbers have dwindled as the high cost of an endless war has resulted in a dearth of replacements.

Time continues to grow short for Arakko.

**SUMMONER MINOR**

Traditional Number:
**600 [CURRENTLY: 250]**

Able to summon a single host or minor daemon.

**SUMMONER ADEPT**

Number:
**30 [CURRENTLY: 8]**

Able to summon a small horde of minor daemons or one major elemental.

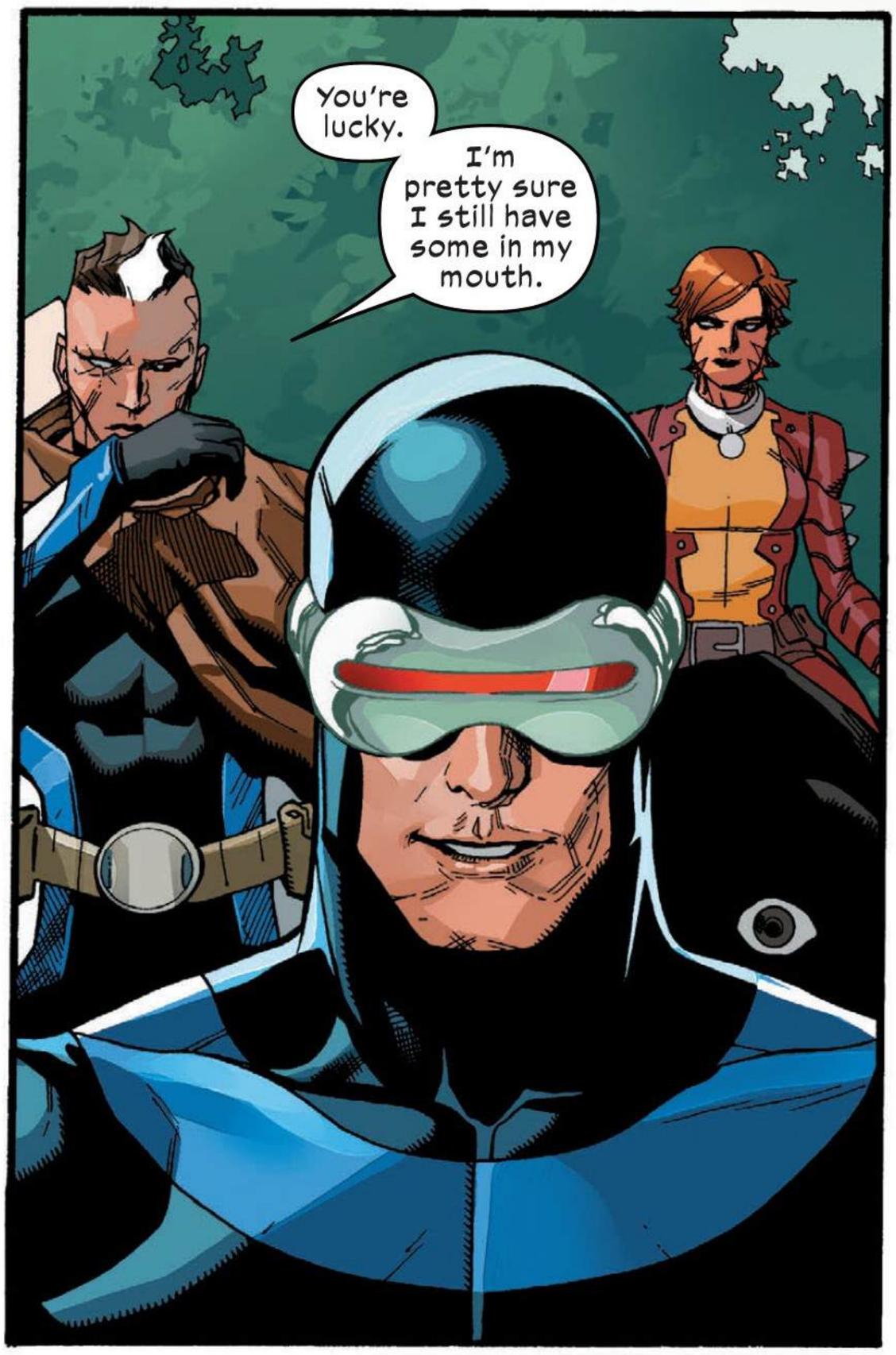
**HIGH SUMMONER**

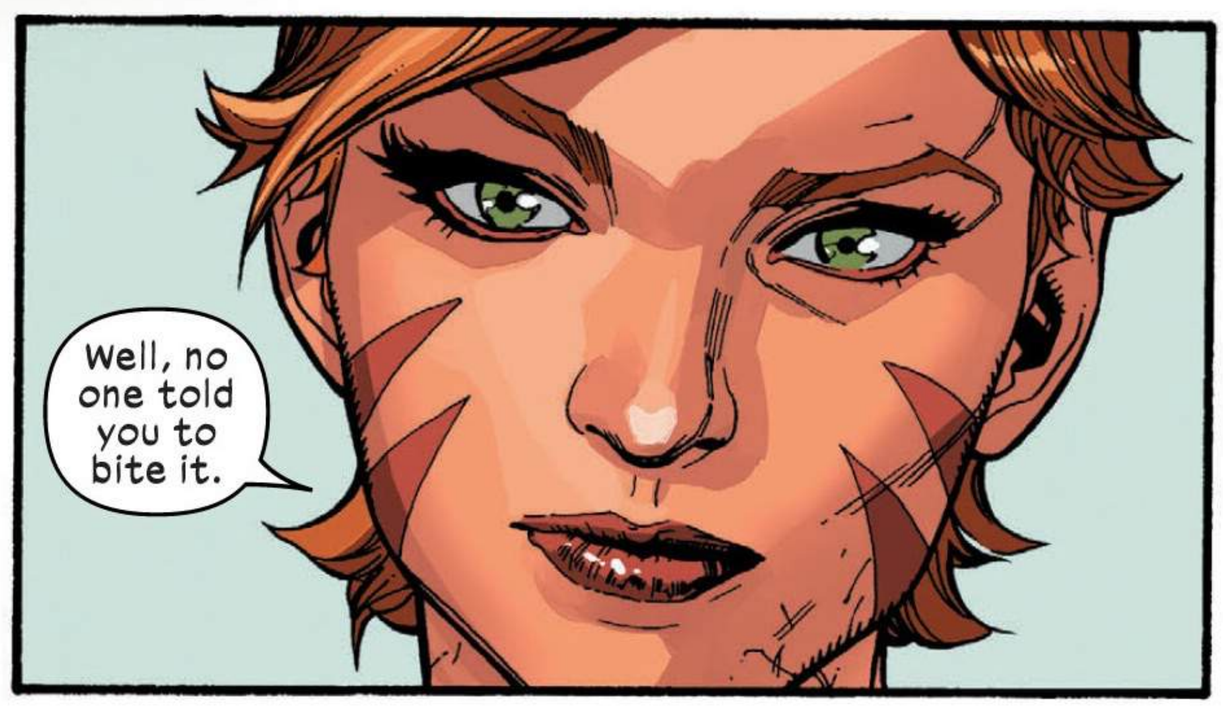
Number:
**3 [CURRENTLY: 1]**

Able to summon a horde of elementals and up to three major daemons.

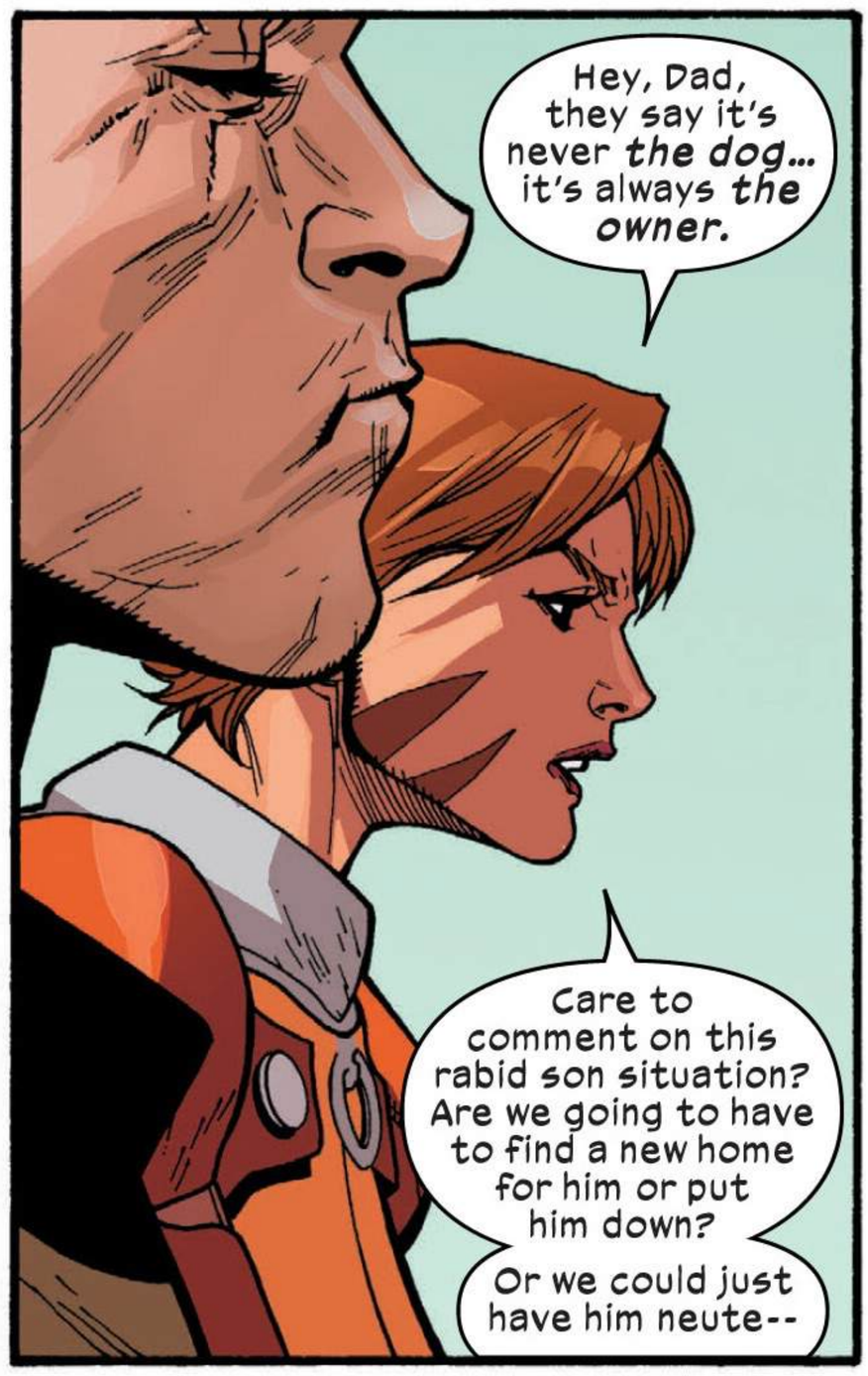
Later.
One hour from contact with Krakoa.

I think I still have demon squid on my shoes.



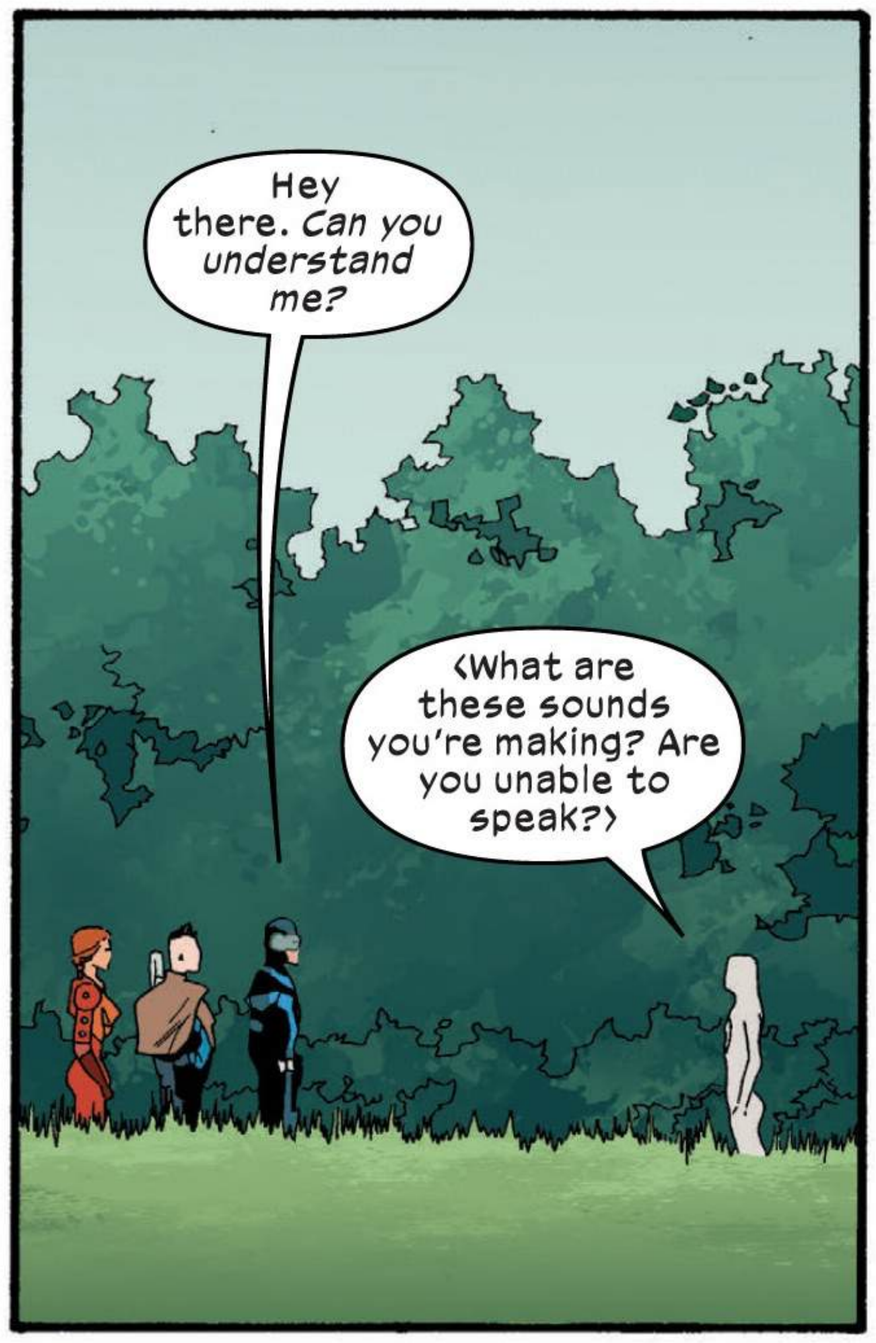



If a gun's not an option, then it's fight, flight or bite, sis.
Don't put me to the test.

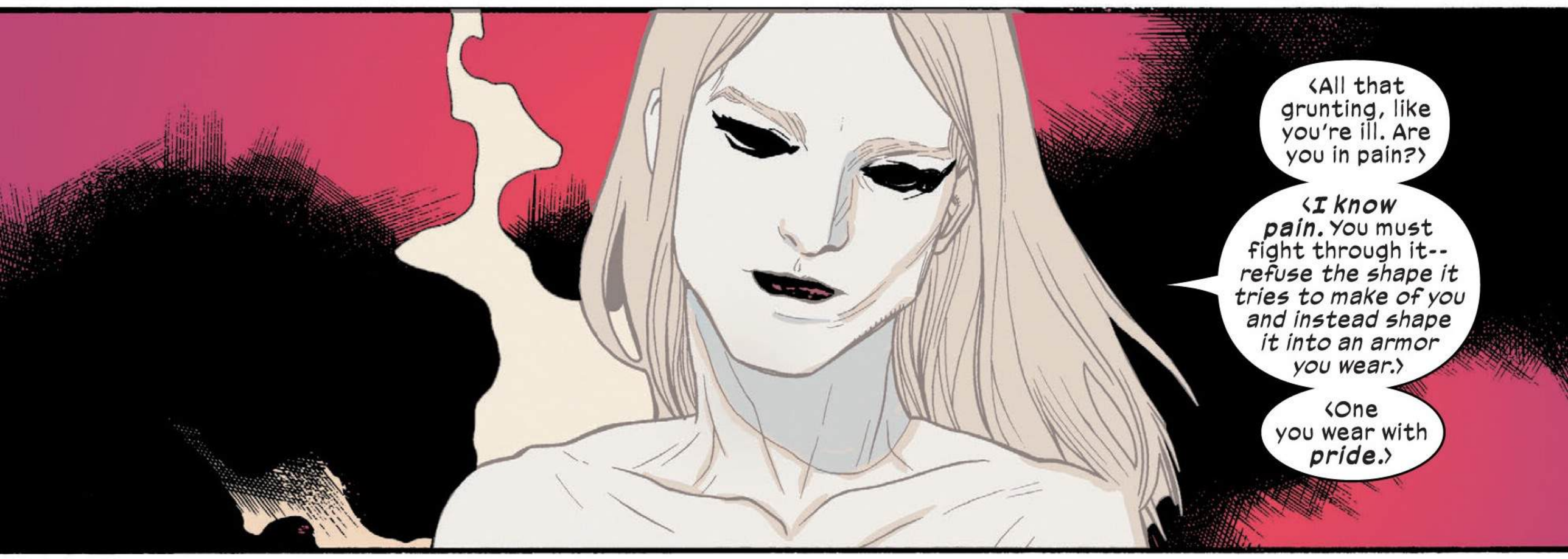

Hey, Dad, they say it's never the dog... it's always the owner.
Care to comment on this rabid son situation? Are we going to have to find a new home for him or put him down?
Or we could just have him neute--

We've got company.
Dead ahead.

...
‹Hello.›

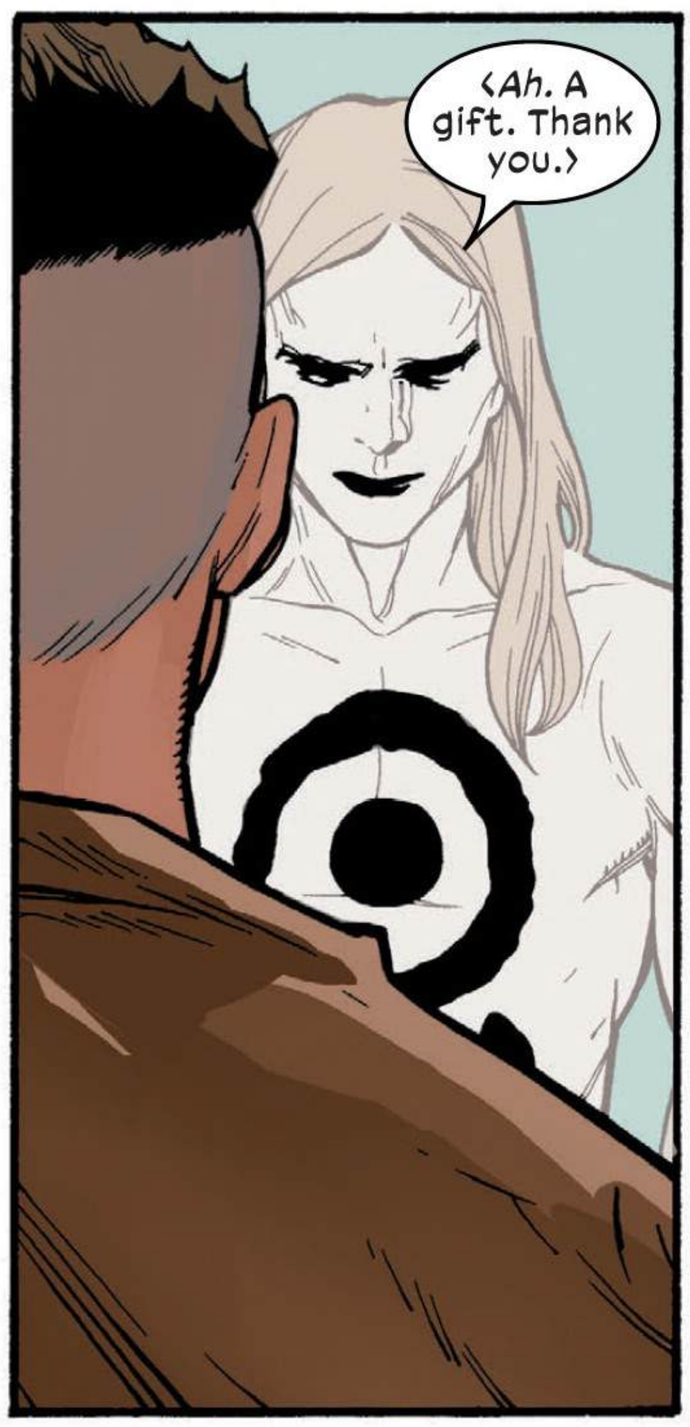

Hey there. *Can you understand me?*
‹What are these sounds you're making? Are you unable to speak?›

I can't place it. Doesn't sound like any language I've ever heard...
Maybe we should try something else?
It's like ***singing.***


‹All that grunting, like you're ill. Are you in pain?›
‹***I know pain.*** You must fight through it-- *refuse the shape it tries to make of you and instead shape it into an armor you wear.*›
‹One you wear with ***pride.***›

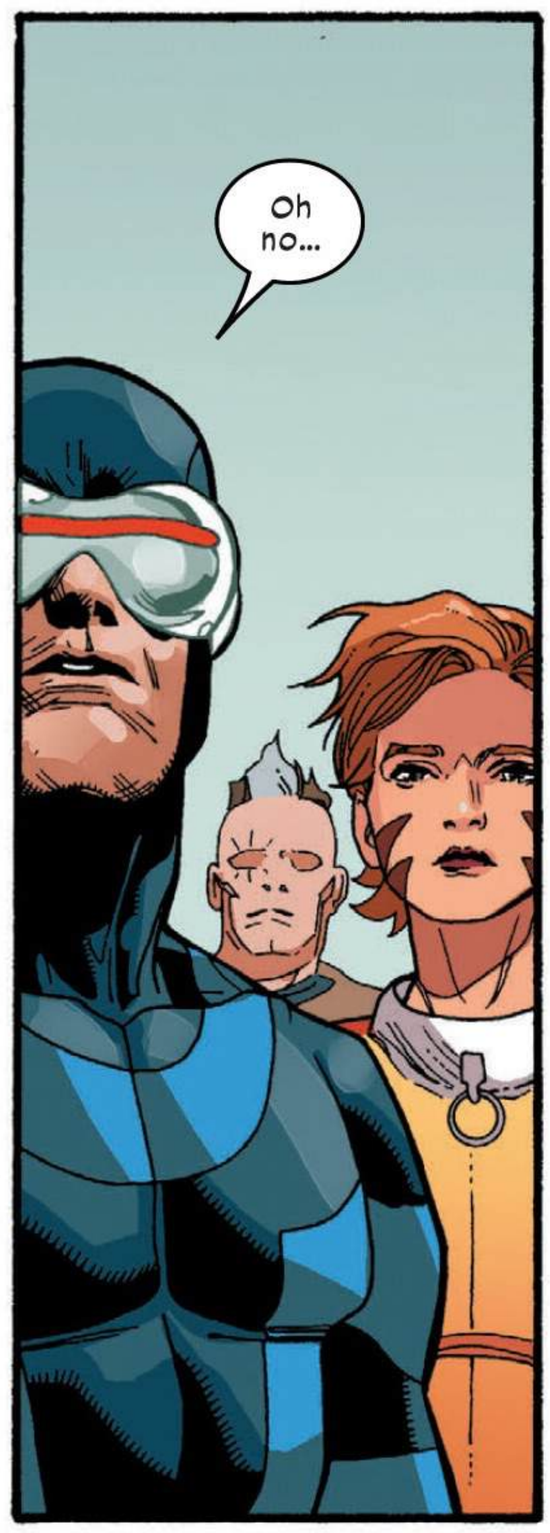
I've got an idea...
I'm going to give it something.

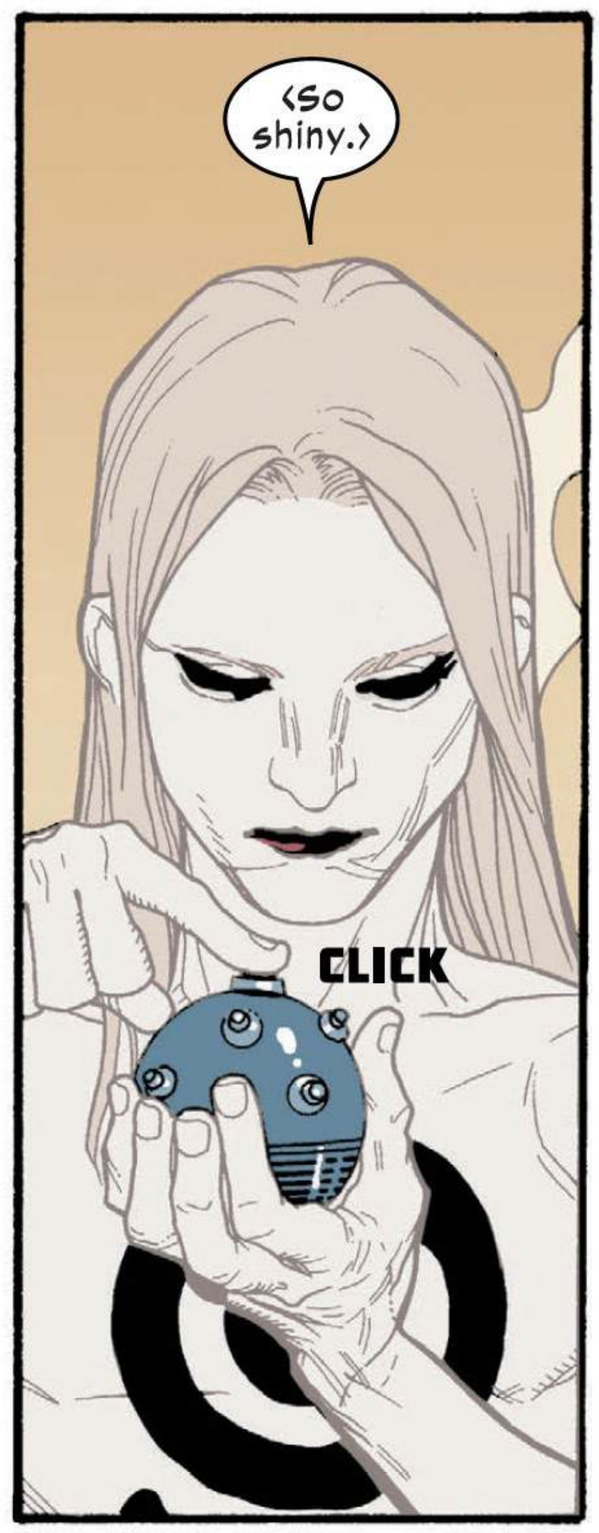
Here, friend. ***For you.***
*Maybe you'll understand...*

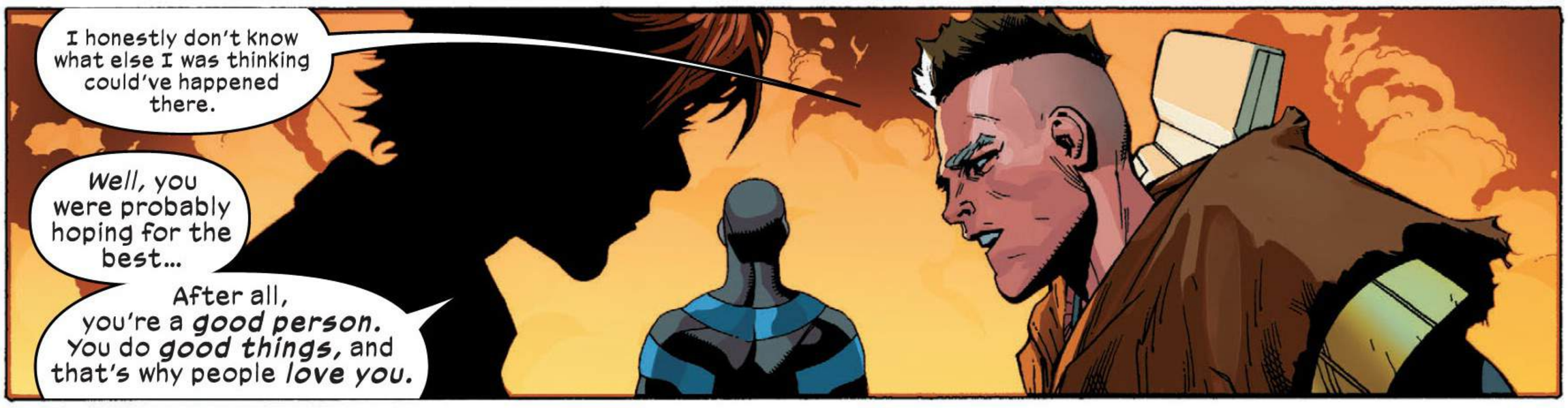

‹*Ah.* A gift. Thank you.›

See? Success!
I'm a good person. I do good things, and that's why people love me.
You should remember that, Rachel.

What'd you give him?
Something awesome. A thermal grenade. My last one.
I'm a giver.

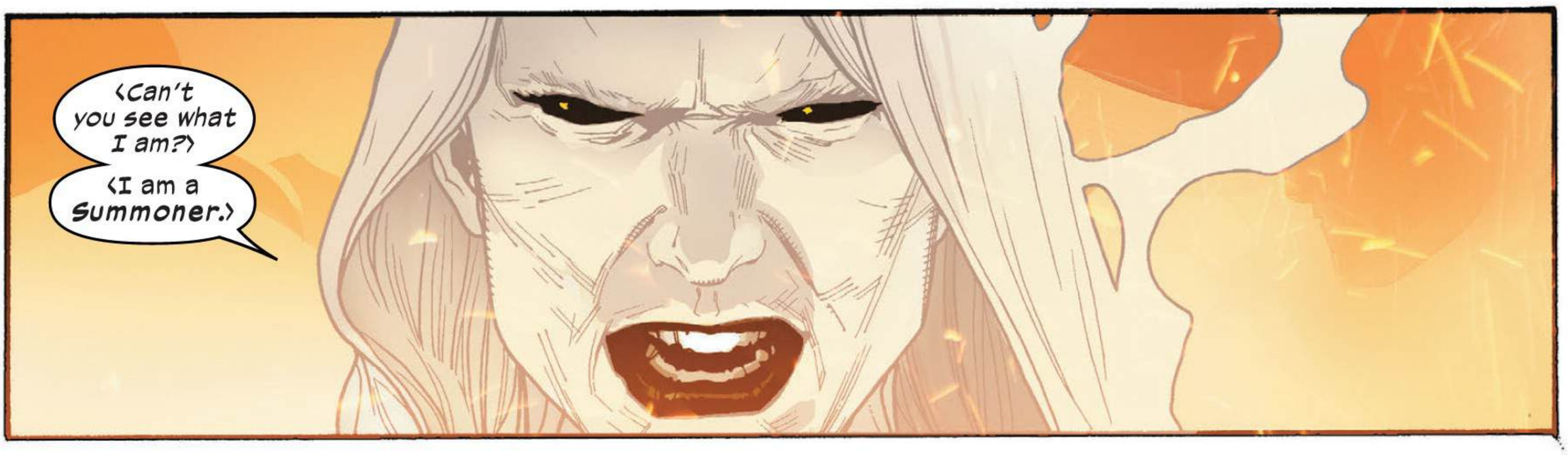

Oh no...

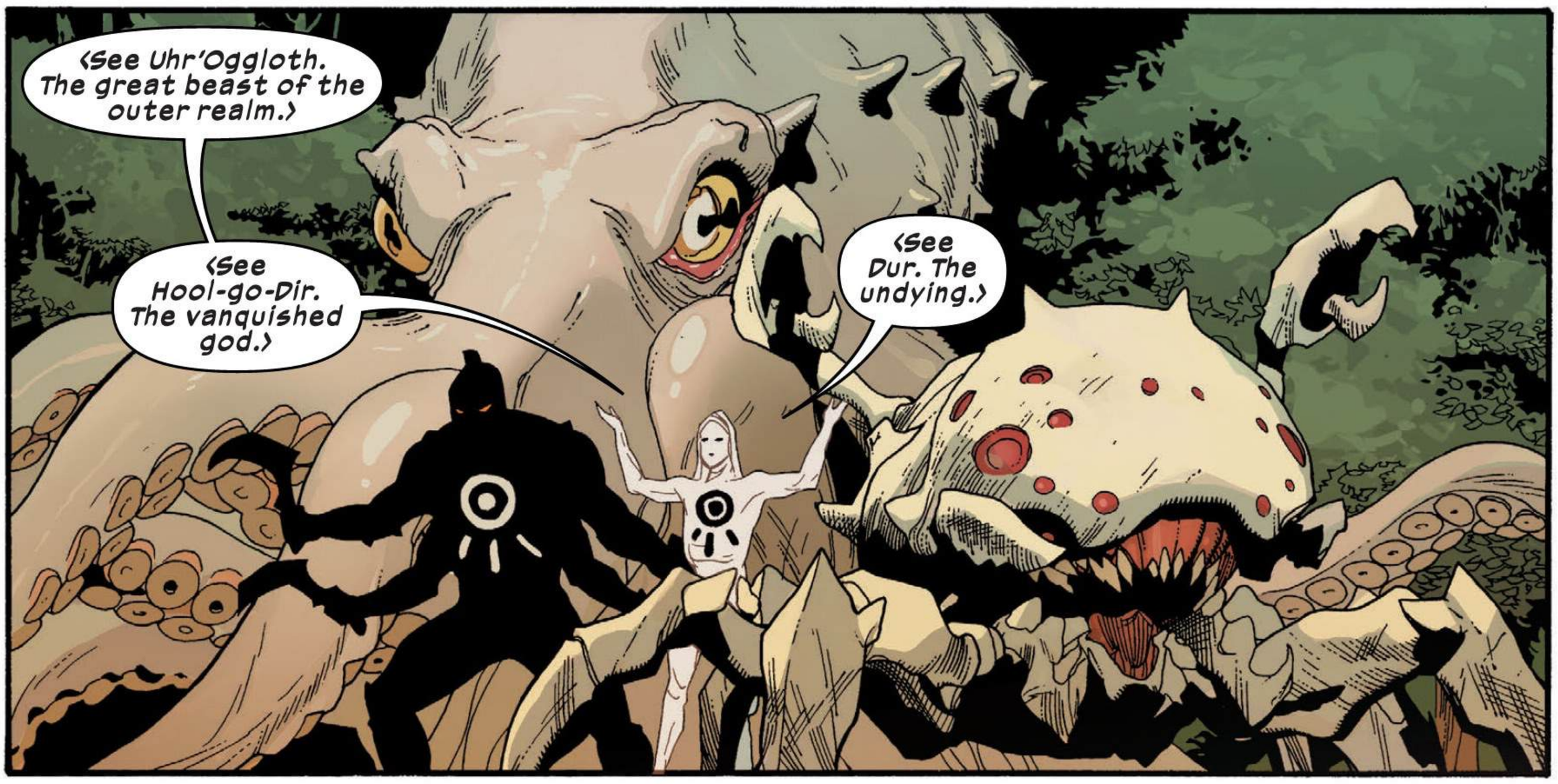

<So shiny.>
CLICK



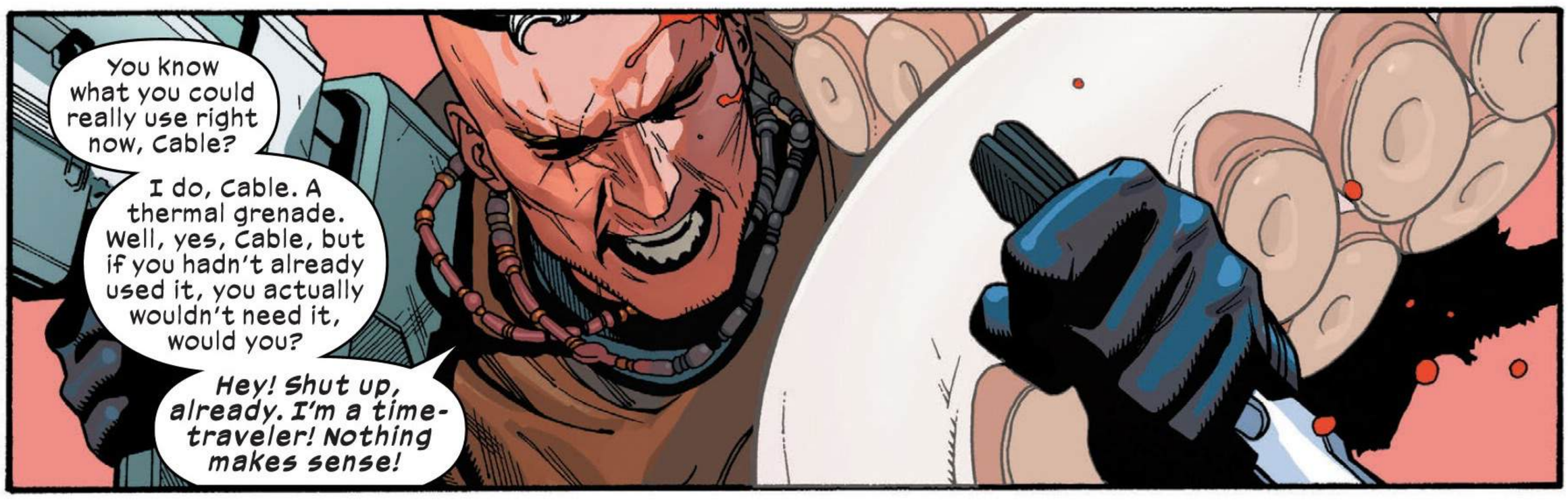
It's time to do the other thing.

<You have erred greatly.>




‹See Uhr'Oggloth. The great beast of the outer realm.›
‹See Hool-go-Dir. The vanquished god.›
‹See Dur. The undying.›

‹See them...and see your end!›
‹For I am a son of Arakko-- a defender of the keep. One does not attack me and live!›

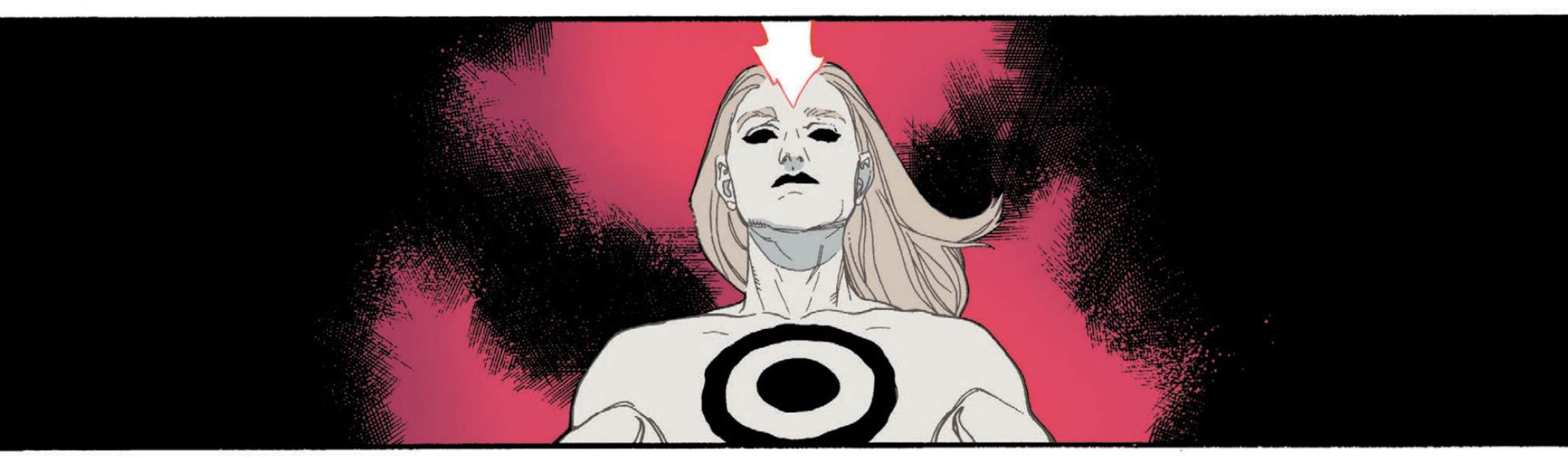

You know what you could really use right now, Cable?
I do, Cable. A thermal grenade. Well, yes, Cable, but if you hadn't already used it, you actually wouldn't need it, would you?
Hey! Shut up, already. I'm a time-traveler! Nothing makes sense!

Rachel!
Krakoa must be close by now, and we're not getting anywhere this way.
We need to be able to talk to him.

We tried, remember?

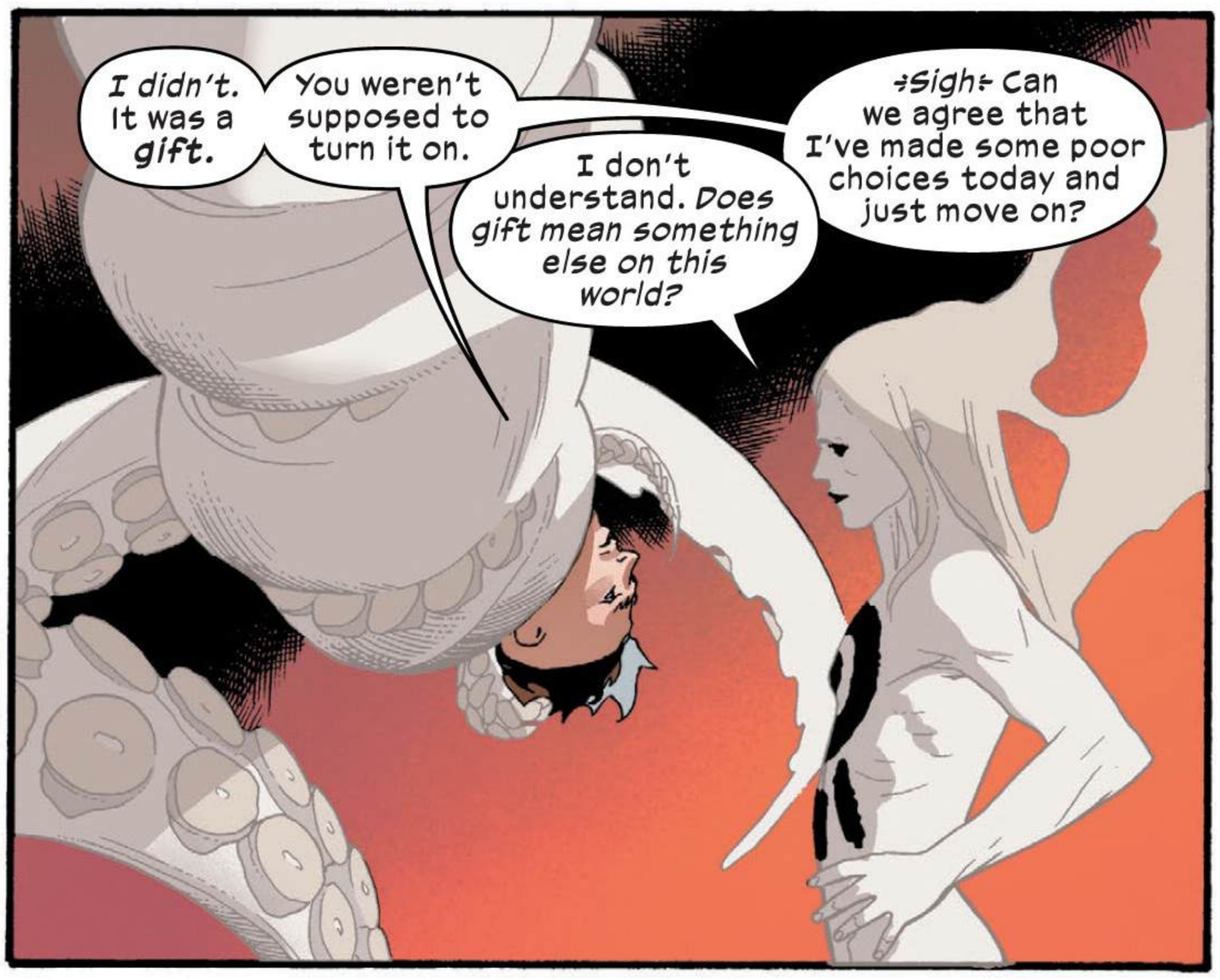
Yes...
But you've helped download Krakoan into every mutant's mind when they get to the island, right?

Right. Good idea.
I should've thought of that.



Uhfff!
Ca--can you understand us now?

...
Yes. I can.
Tell me... why did you try to destroy me?


I didn't. It was a gift.
You weren't supposed to turn it on.
I don't understand. Does gift mean something else on this world?
÷Sigh÷ Can we agree that I've made some poor choices today and just move on?

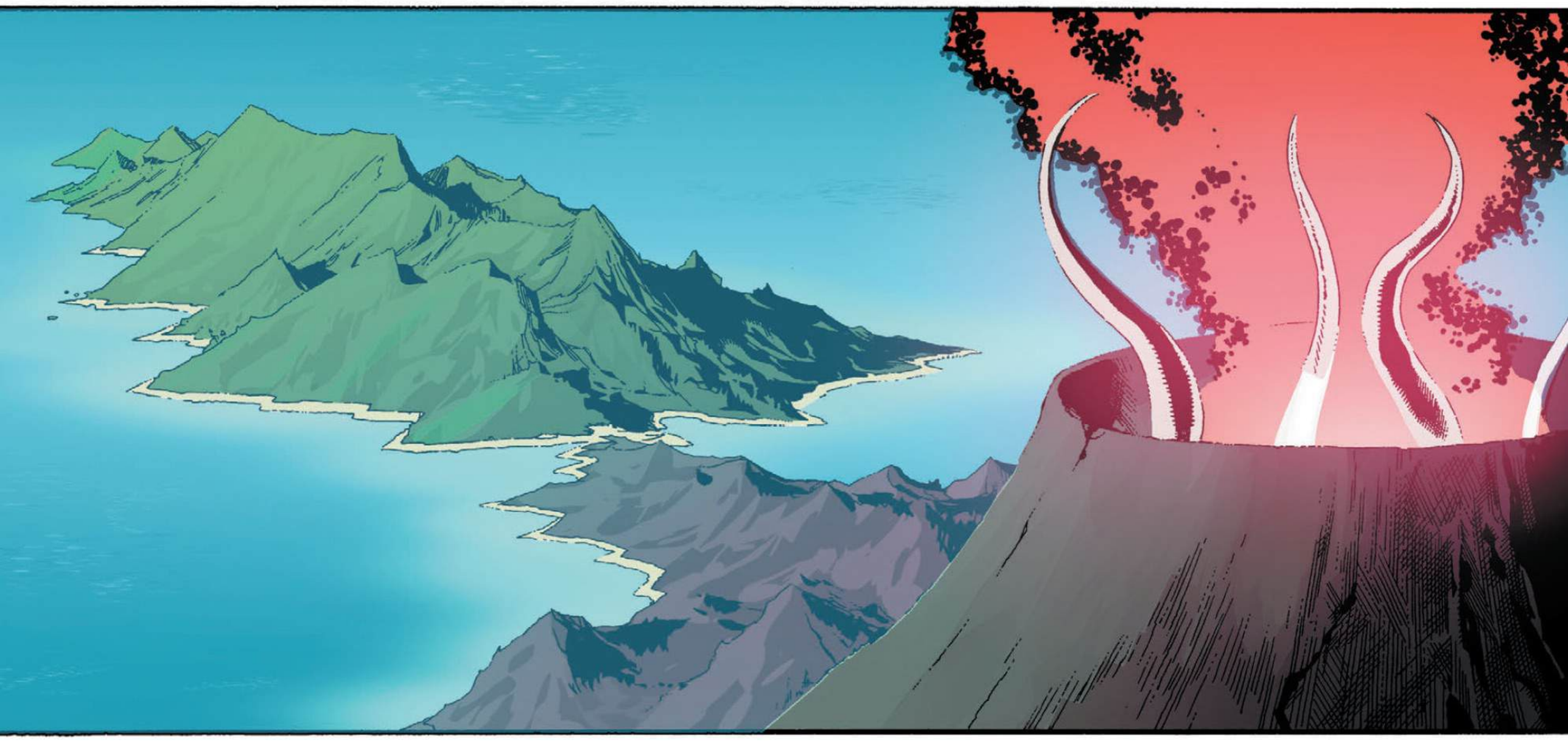
Look. We don't want to fight you. We simply want to know why the island we're from--Krakoa--is headed to this island--your island...
...and if it's going to be a problem.

Do you love someone?

Complicated question.
But for the sake of expediency let's just say yes.
I love a single someone.

And you want to be with them, yes?
Of course.

Then you understand.
Watch.



Oh man... I...
Are the islands...are they...
I honestly don't want to know.

What. Was. That?
Well, son, I think that's how all my best mistakes have happened.

Now the two are one...

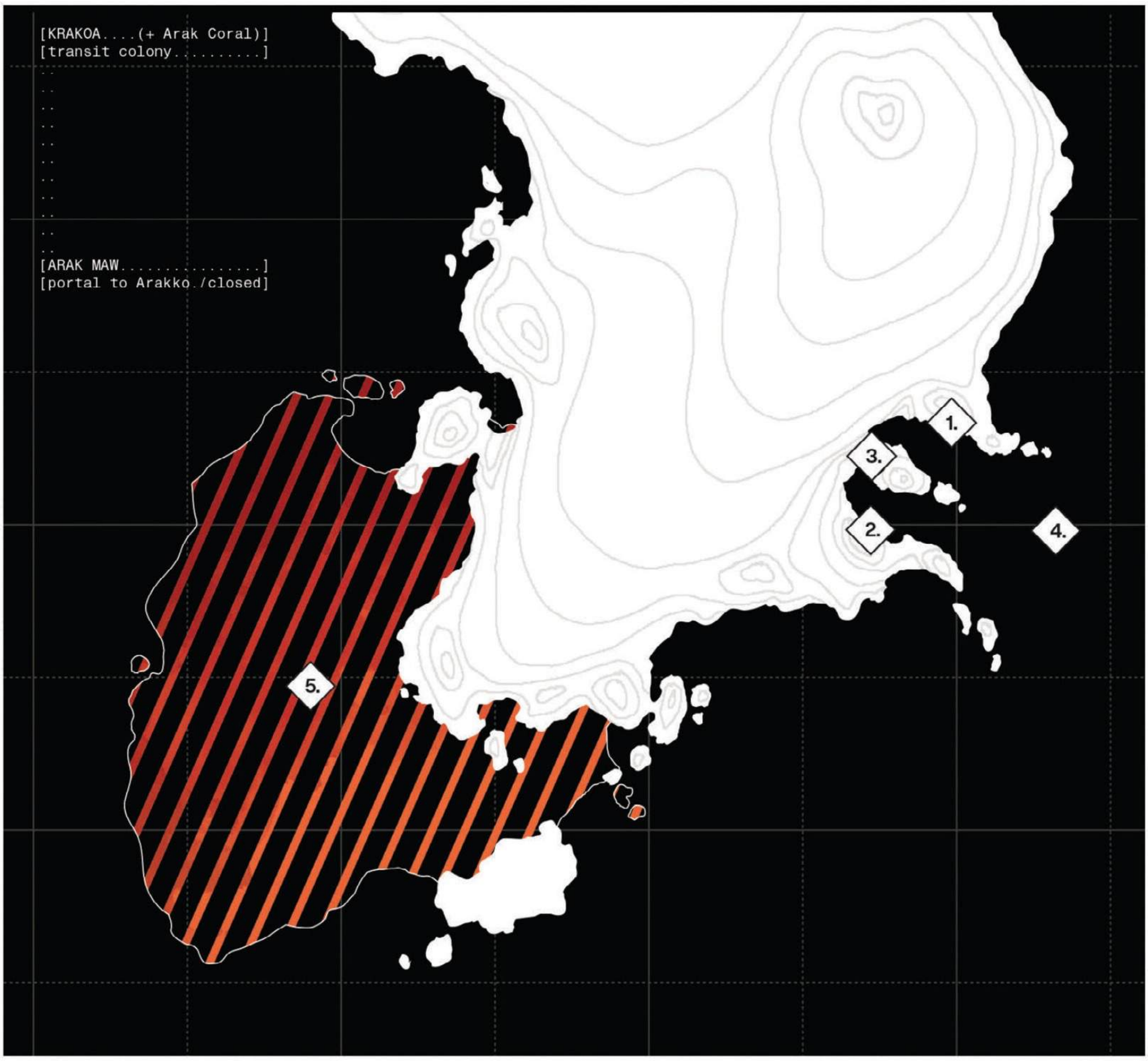
"As they should be.
"As they always were."

Hey! Where are you going?
What happens now?
I'm not going anywhere...
...because now I live here...

...and I live here because he lives here.

# KRAKOA [+ARAK CORAL]

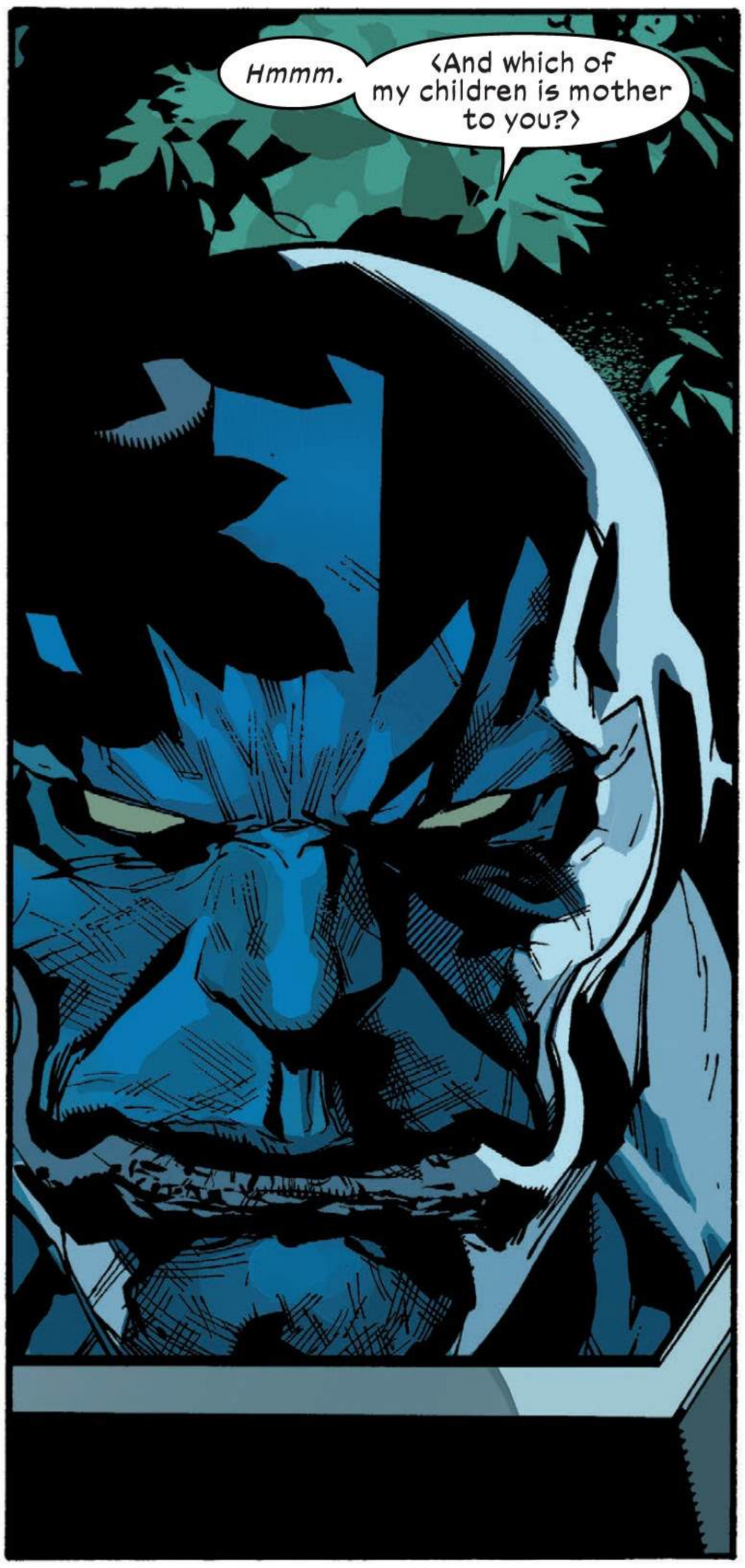
1. THE RED KEEP
2. BLACKSTONE
3. THE WHITE PALACE
4. HELLFIRE BAY
5. ARAK MAW [TRANSIT TO ARAKKO]-[CLOSED]



‹For at night...even new gods slumber.›

‹We have never met, but I would recognize your seed anywhere...›

‹Did you run away... or were you sent?›


Hmmm.
‹And which of my children is mother to you?›

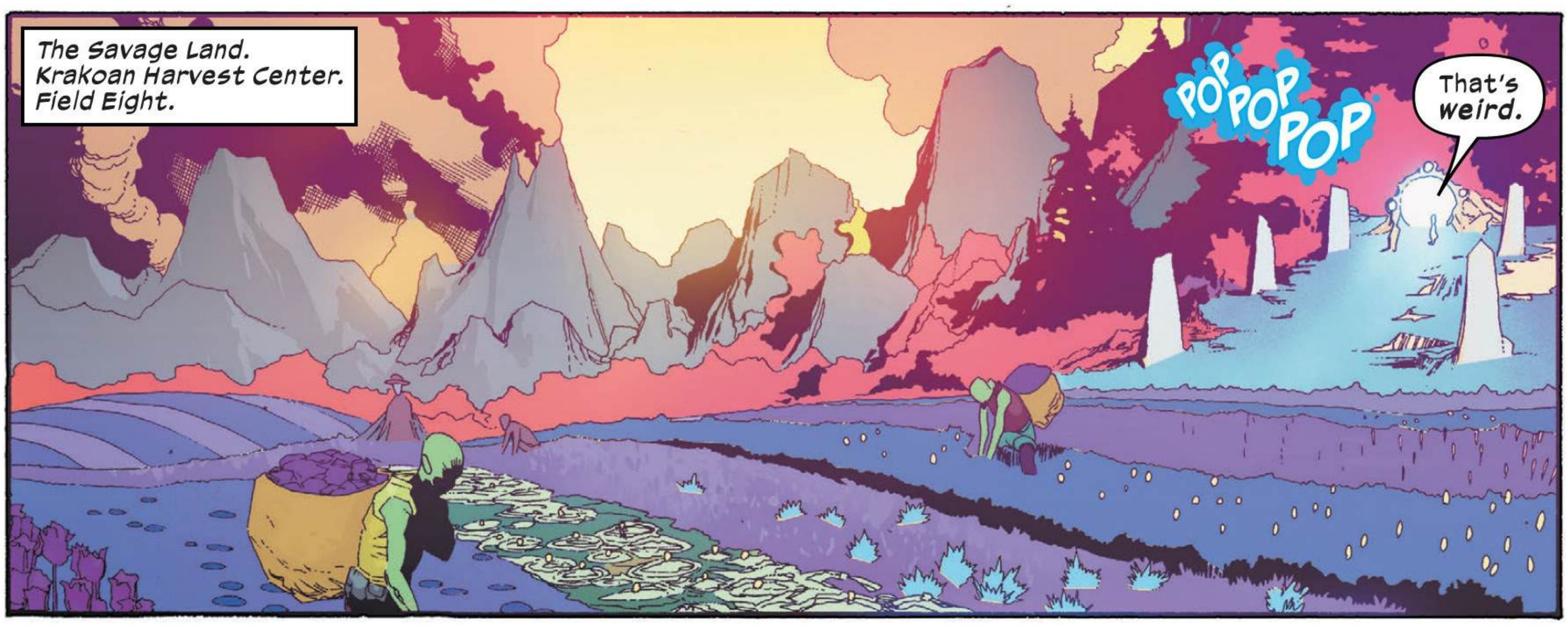
‹War.›

‹Yes. I can see that now. You have it in you.›
‹Will you save us? Can you save us?›
‹I can. I will.›
‹For I mean to save all of my children...›

‹Those of Krakoa... and those of Arakko.›

# Hordeculture

3

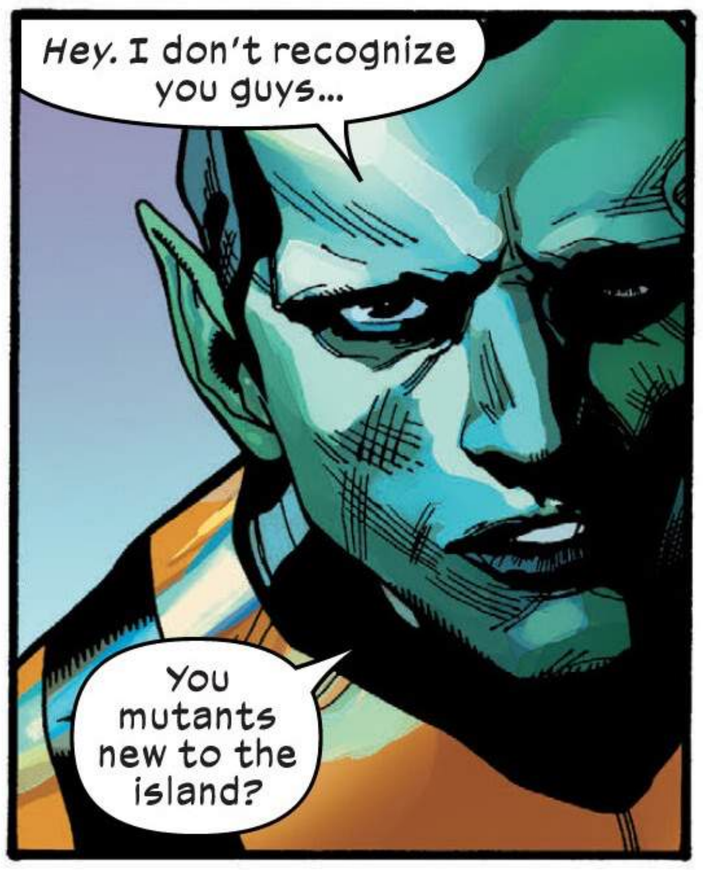


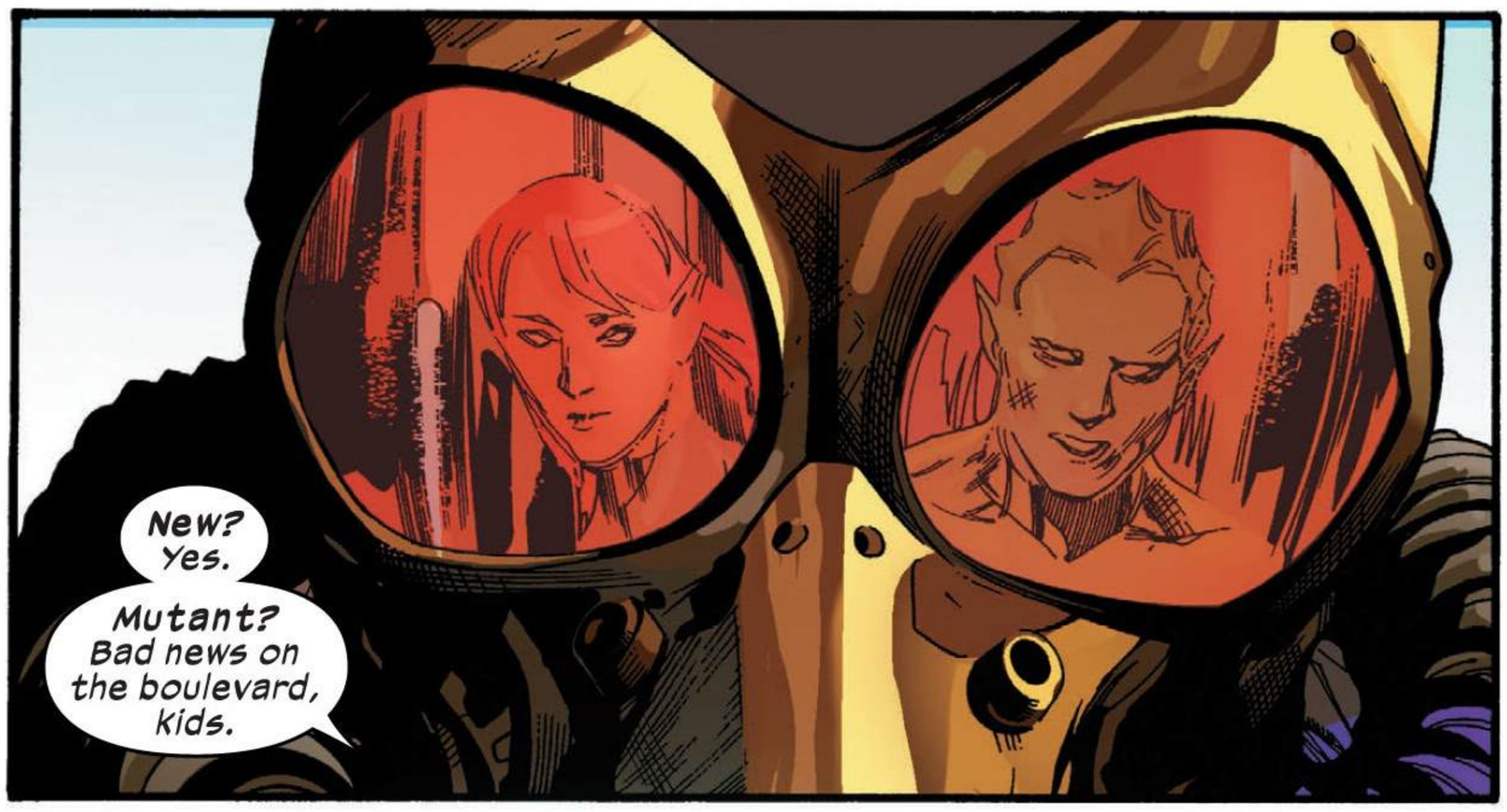
ZZRRNNNN

Is this *Kansas?*

Doesn't look much like ***Kansas.*** And I would know-- *I got into trouble in Kansas once.*

No. This isn't Kansas. This is Krakoa.
You're in the Savage Land.
We grow flowers here.


Hey. I don't recognize you guys...
You mutants new to the island?


New? Yes.
Mutant? Bad news on the boulevard, kids.

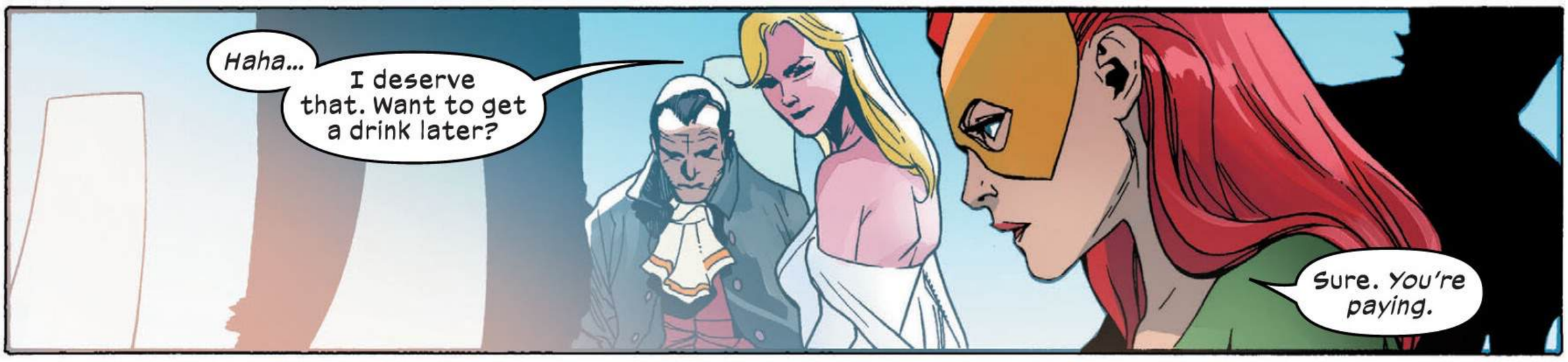
Wh-why?

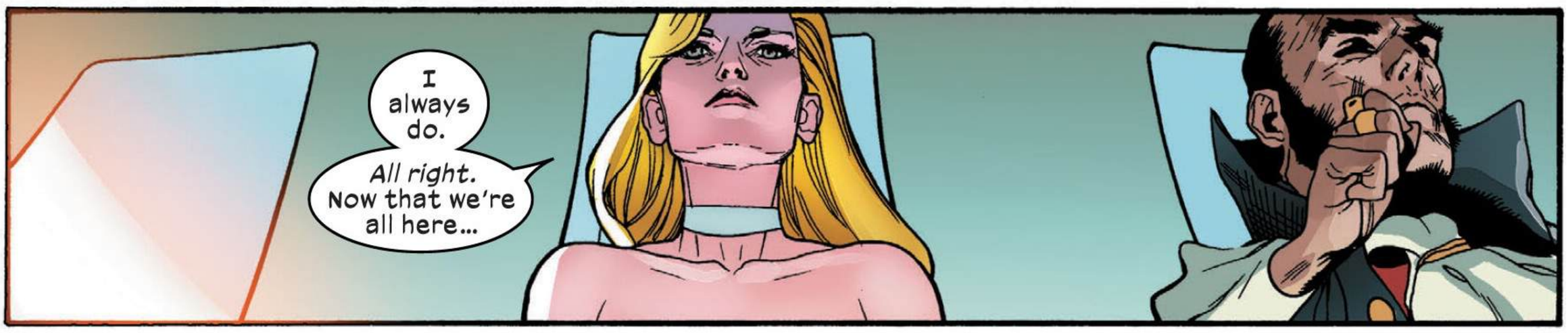
Why? That's obvious, isn't it, dear?
We just love the s-word out of flowers.

Krakoa.
The Quiet Council.
All right. We're here.
What's gone wrong now?

Something truly unexpected.
Please. Have a seat.

Hey. I know that look. You all right?
I smell smoke. Should I assume fire?
Yes. We're going to send you out.
We can't access the Savage Land. Something's wrong with Krakoa.
Well then...it's a good thing I've been well trained in righting wrongs.
Don't worry...I'll take care of it.
Emma.
Nice of you to show up.
In with the wind. Not a hair out of place.
Gotta tell you...
I love those shoes.
Why, thank you, Jean.
I would offer to let you borrow them, but I think they're a couple sizes too small.




Someone want to explain why I have this headache?

[00.Krakoa.....X]
[00.....0]

# KRAKOA IS SCREAMING

[Krakoa].....[EAT]
[.....].....[NUL]

## SAVAGE LAND GATEWAY NONRESPONSIVE

The [suspected] forced seizure of a Krakoan gate has caused Krakoa itself incredible discomfort -- this has resulted in several unexpected, abnormal island disturbances:

- Krakoan wildlife has gotten more aggressive. After a period of over a month with no reported incidences with the island's wildlife, there have been six in the last hour.
- Undetectable to most mutants, Black Tom Cassidy has noted a decrease in island mass. Beast has confirmed this and noted a decrease of .0001 percent, or roughly 158 square feet.
- Finally, all telepaths within the localized manifestation of the island are currently experiencing an increased level of psychic assault/consumption.*

*An action team has been tasked with discovering what has happened to the gate and, if possible, re-establishing its connection to Krakoa.*

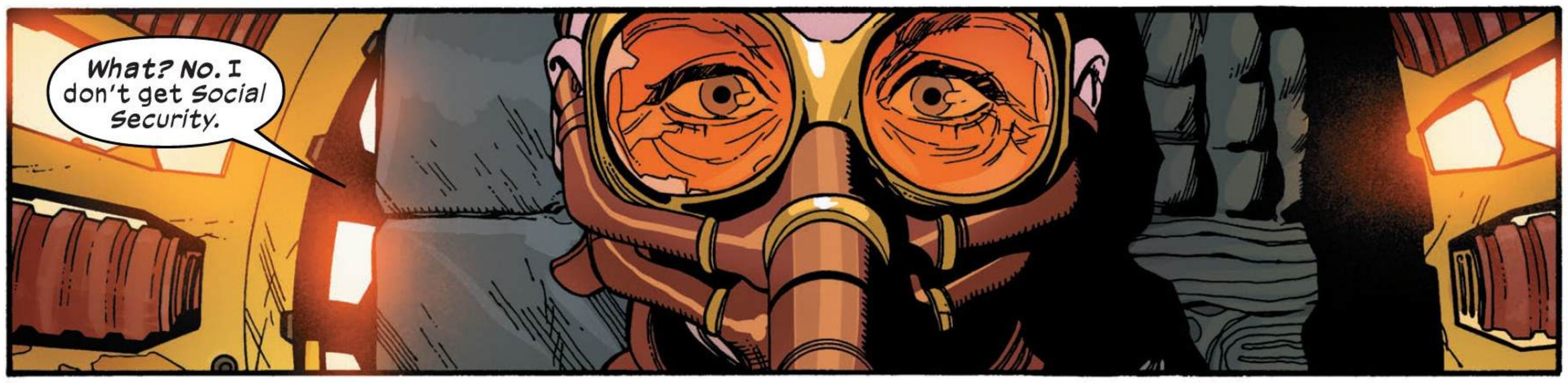
## FEED THE ISLAND

*As most know, Krakoa "feeds" on the psychic energy of mutants. When the island is at maximum growth [not the contracted, pre-nation state, "winter" version], Krakoa needs to consume two mutants a year to maintain a stable environment. However, the current population of Krakoa means that only a minimal amount of psychic energy is needed from each citizen to maintain the health of the island -- something each mutant is happy to give.

There are aggressive protocols in place to ensure that Krakoa is not exceeding its minimal psychic draw. Two mutants who share similar limitations as the island [mutants who feed on mutants], Selene and Emplate, have been tasked to observe the levels of psychic depletion among the island's mutant population. [Similar protocols are used for the two of them as well.]

[SELENE].....[EAT]
[MPLATE].....[ALL]

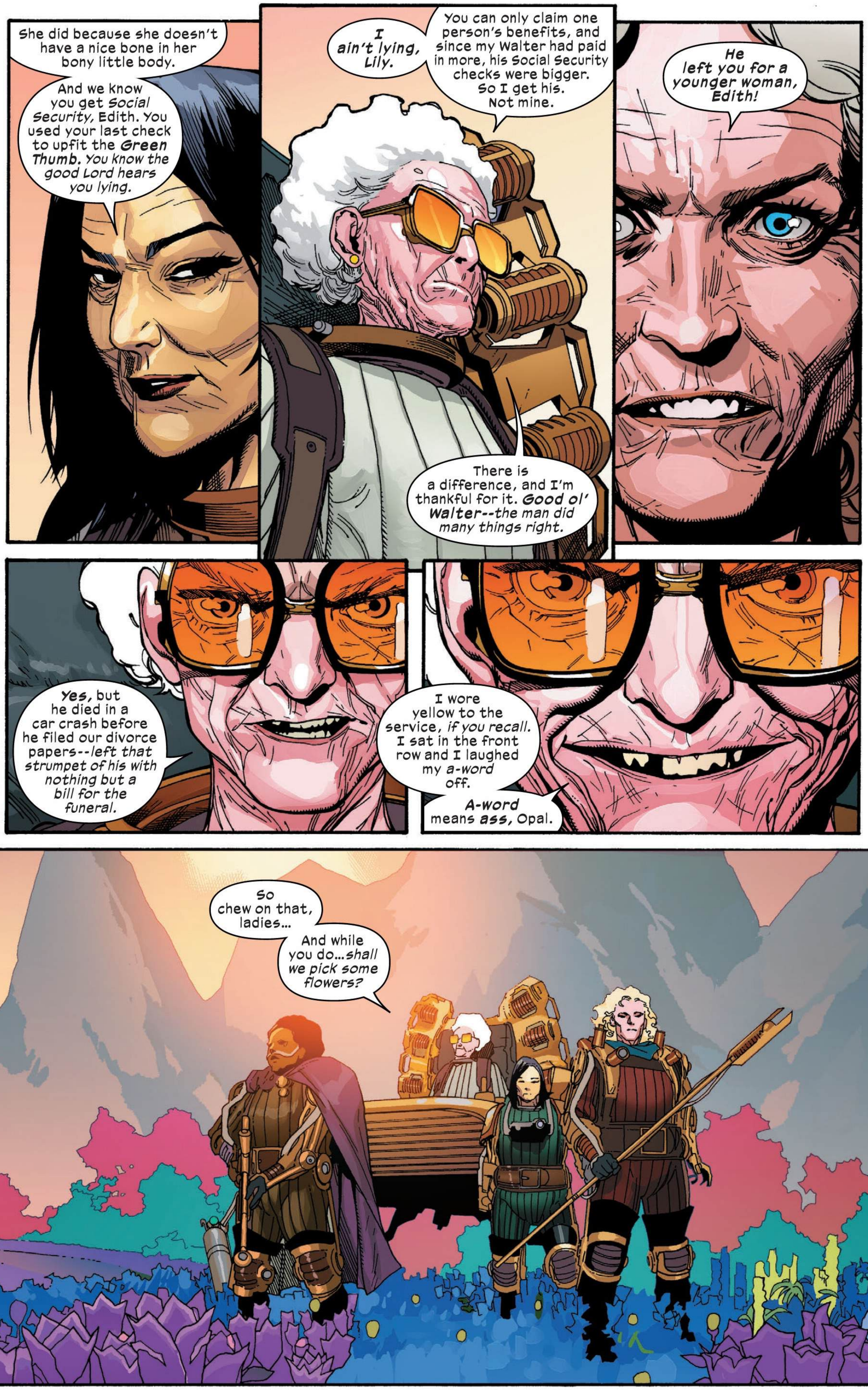
That's the *last two.* Not much ***fight*** in them.
I think these might've been the peaceful mutants...*their flower children.*
*All I see is soft. Soft. Soft.*
Given that, I woulda thought the mutants woulda had slightly more spirited security.


***What? No.*** I don't get *Social Security.*

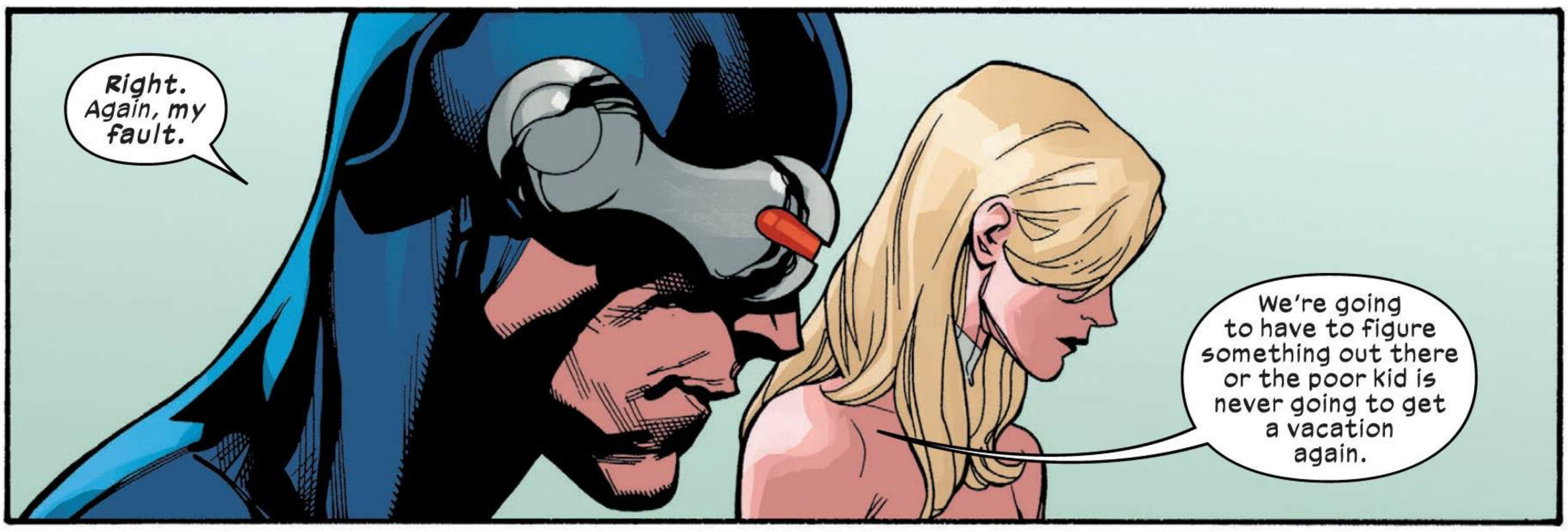
I said ***spir-i-ted*** security, *Edith*--not ***So-cial*** Security.
Take your mask off. You can't hear worth a damn with it on.
*Won't make much difference, Augusta.* She can't hear worth a *d-word* with it off either.

*Hrmpt!* You can *d-word* my *b-word,* Opal.
*B-word* all the way to the store and back. ***For your smokies.***

***No. No more smokies.*** The doctor was very clear on our last visit. He could see the signs, and the signs were very clear--*Opal is off the tobacco.*
So now I'm chewing that gum. Can't say I care for it much.
I don't know why you had to bring that up, Edith.


She did because she doesn't have a nice bone in her bony little body.
And we know you get *Social Security,* Edith. You used your last check to upfit the ***Green Thumb.*** *You know the good Lord hears you lying.*
*I ain't lying, Lily.*
You can only claim one person's benefits, and since my Walter had paid in more, his Social Security checks were bigger. So I get his. Not mine.
There is a difference, and I'm thankful for it. ***Good ol' Walter***--*the man did many things right.*
*He left you for a younger woman, Edith!*
***Yes,*** but he died in a car crash before he filed our divorce papers--*left that strumpet of his with nothing but a bill for the funeral.*
I wore yellow to the service, *if you recall.* I sat in the front row and I laughed my *a-word* off.
***A-word*** means ***ass,*** Opal.
So chew on that, ladies...
And while you do...*shall we pick some flowers?*

The Outback.
Exactly how's this work?
We can still access any of the other gateways, just not the specific gateway to the Savage Land.
Not only is it not functioning properly, but the longer it's malfunctioning, the more Krakoa seems to be in pain.
Five minutes into that Council meeting and Jean, Paris and I were ready to crawl out of our skin.
I wish we had young Douglas around to translate.

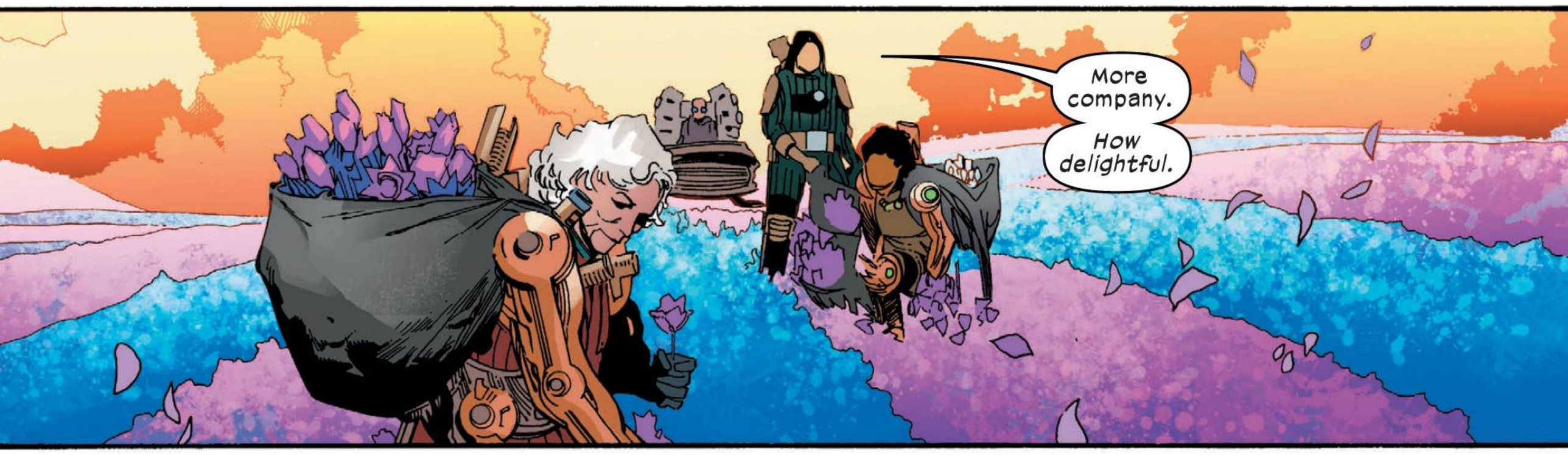

Right. Again, my fault.
We're going to have to figure something out there or the poor kid is never going to get a vacation again.

So, do I dare inquire as to how traveling to Australia is getting us closer to the Savage Land?

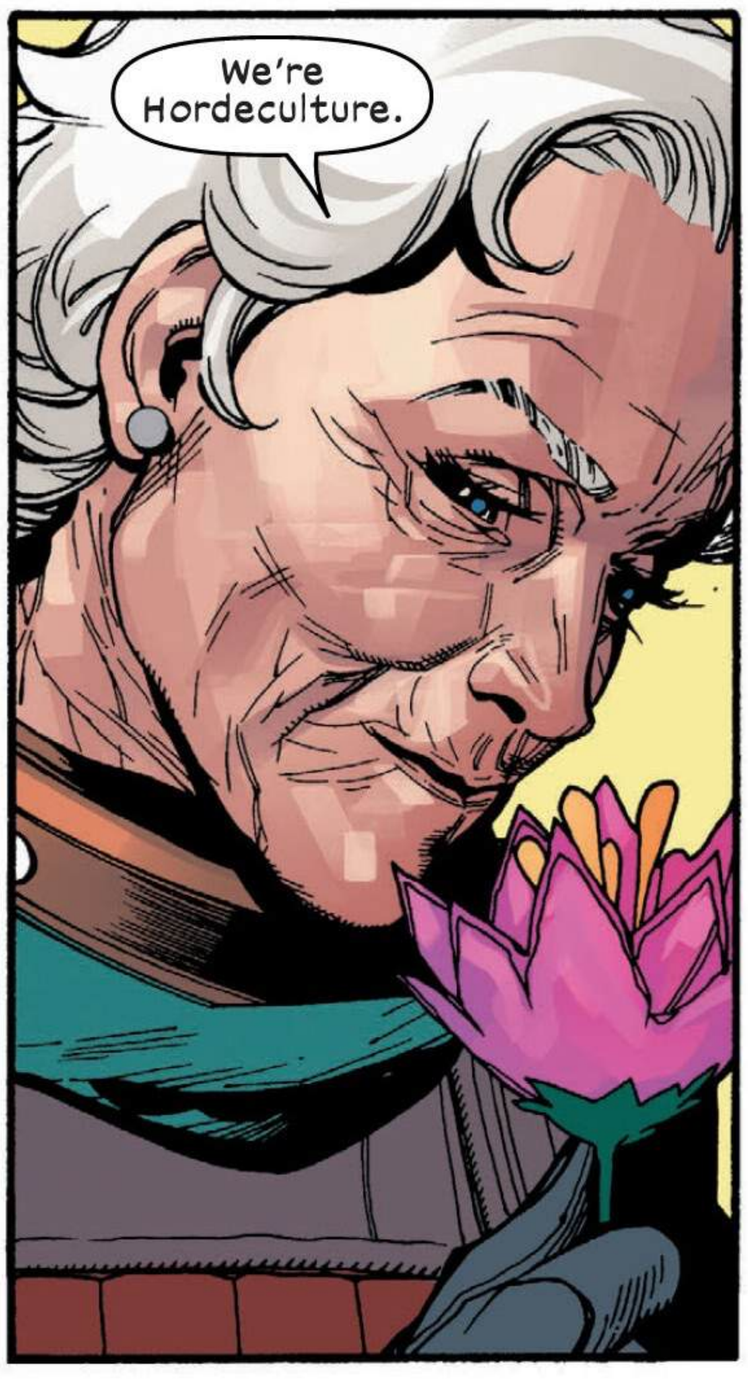
Well, it is actually closer...
But we need a quick way there, and Magik's off-planet too...

So we're going to catch another ride.

The Savage Land.

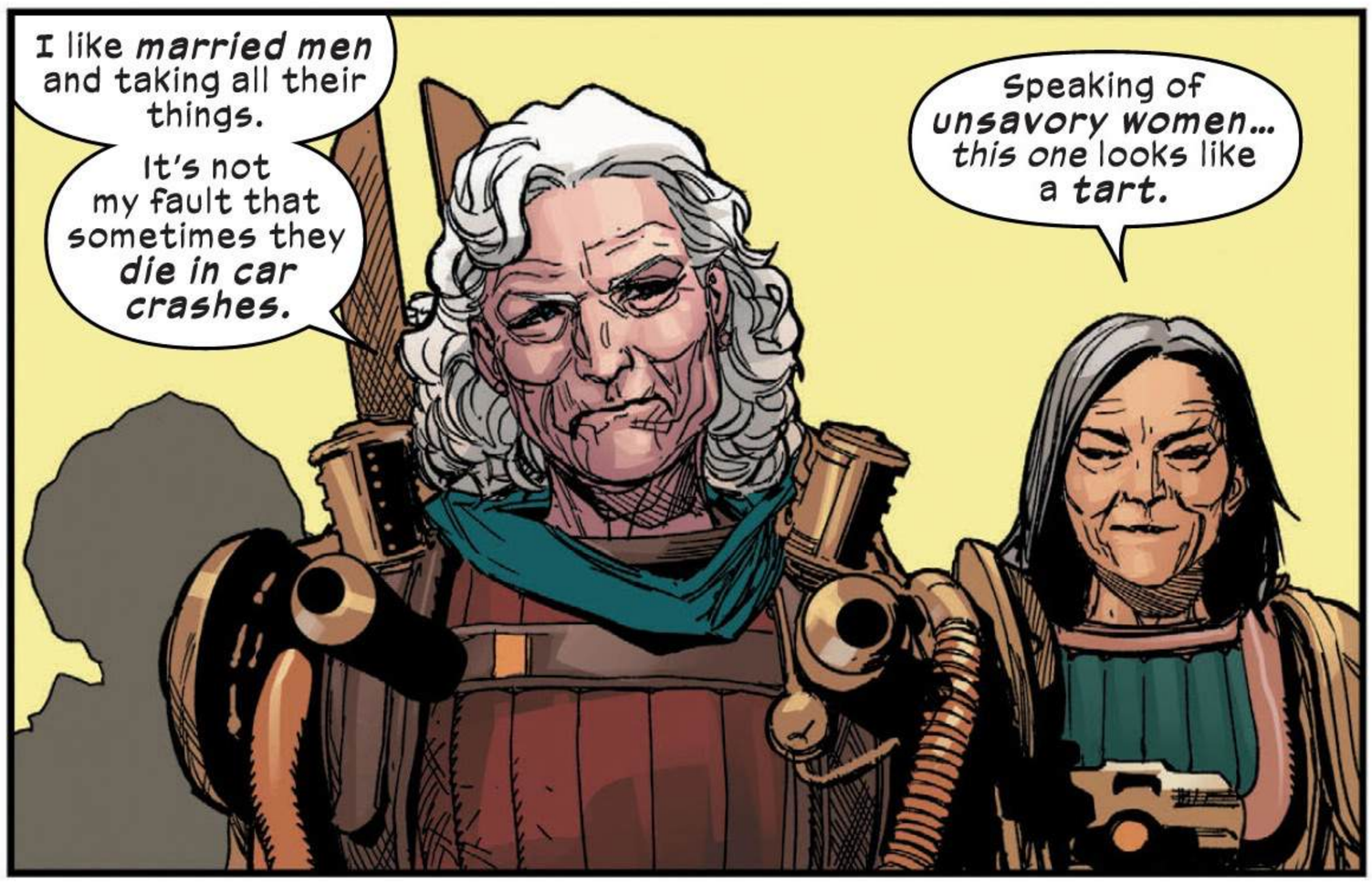

More company.
How delightful.

We've been invaded by octogenarians.
That's... unexpected.
Ladies. You've caused a bit of a ruckus, and people are upset.
Mind introducing yourselves?


We're Hordeculture.

Whoredeculture?

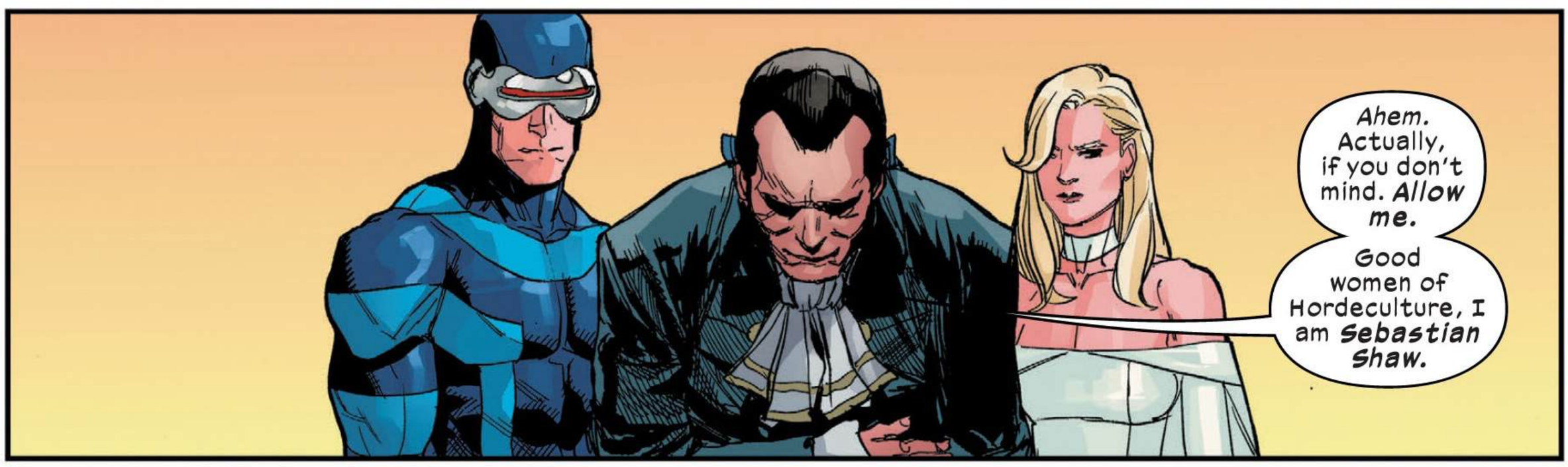
No. Hordeculture.
No one here wants to hear about all that whoring around in Kansas Augusta did.

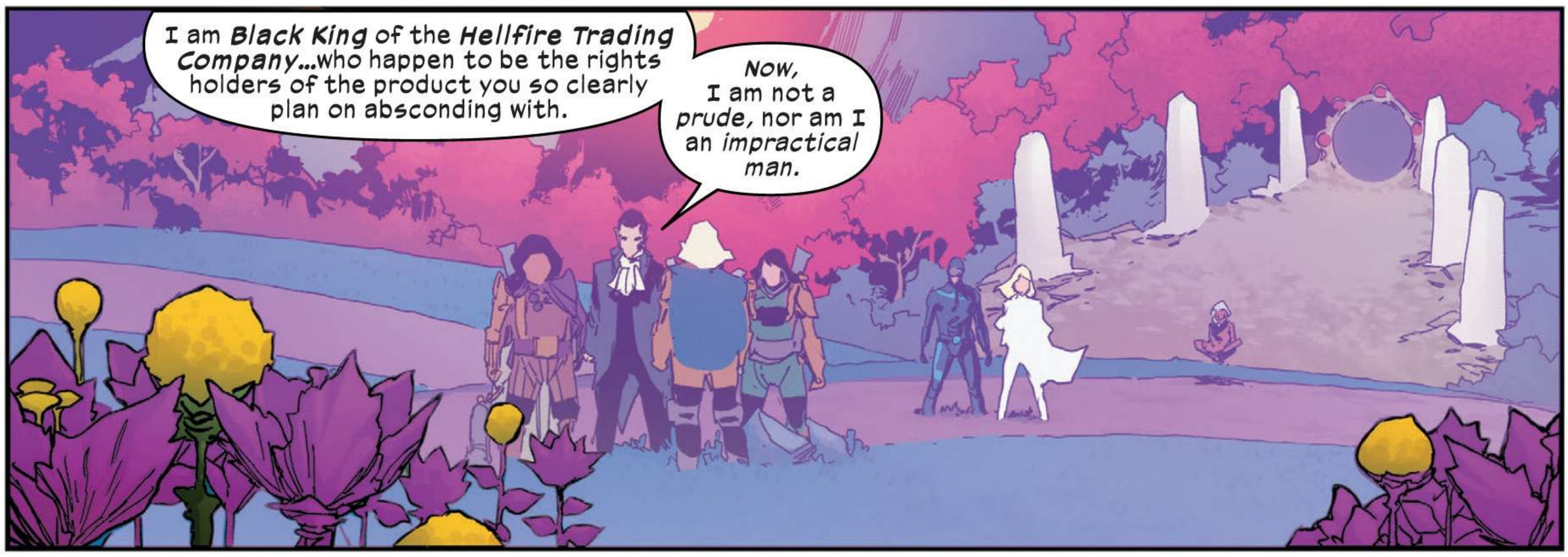

I like *married men* and taking all their things.
It's not my fault that sometimes they *die in car crashes.*
Speaking of *unsavory women...* *this one* looks like a *tart.*

*Uh-huh.* She dresses like an *s-word* with a serious *p-word* problem.
You need to wash yourself, girl.

I won't fight old women.
And their minds are shielded somehow...

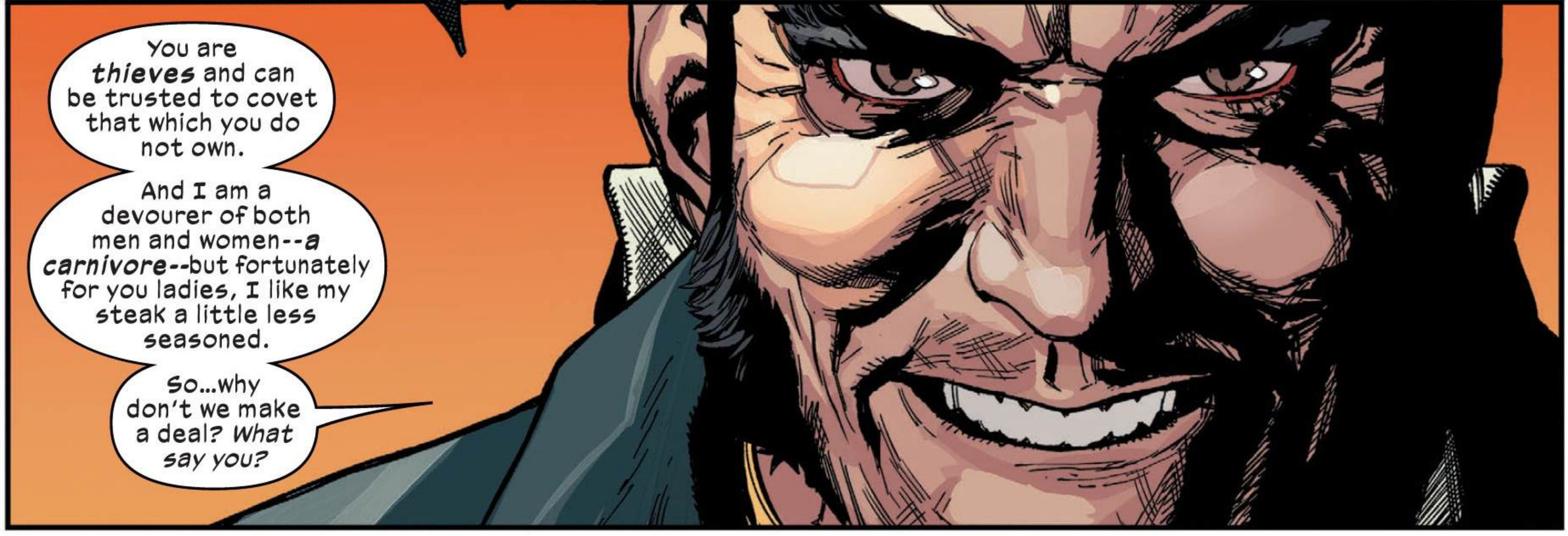
*So, dear,* if you could hit these...*ladies* harder than you normally would, it would only make me love you more.


*Ahem.* Actually, if you don't mind. ***Allow me.***
Good women of Hordeculture, I am ***Sebastian Shaw.***


I am Black King of the Hellfire Trading Company...who happen to be the rights holders of the product you so clearly plan on absconding with.
Now, I am not a prude, nor am I an impractical man.

And--between us girls--over the years, I too have been known to purloin precious items--like those flowers you hold in your hand and even flowers such as yourselves--for my own quite selfish and otherwise loin-related reasons.
For we are all self-serving.

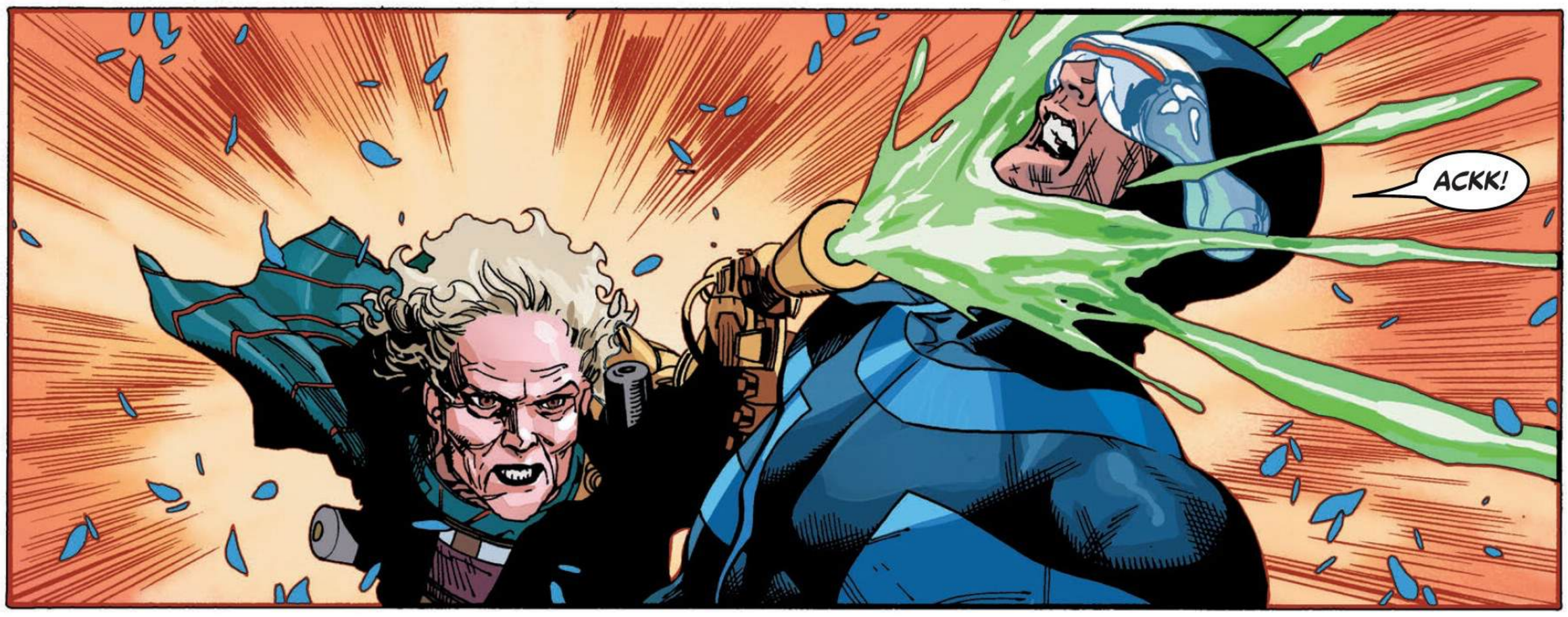
So, surely--in the spirit of personal enrichment and the acquisition of all the things we desire--we can come to some sort of agreement...
You get what you want: some of our product without the stigma of theft.
And we would get what we want, which is an understanding of how you have compromised what we believed to be a closed system of transit.
Yes, there is the complication of "Can we trust one another?" Especially when the formation of our blooming relationship has begun thusly...
But I believe we can find some solid footing in an agreement regarding our natures.


You are thieves and can be trusted to covet that which you do not own.
And I am a devourer of both men and women--a carnivore--but fortunately for you ladies, I like my steak a little less seasoned.
So...why don't we make a deal? What say you?

PSSHHHT
Hit him with the gas, Lily!
Already done, Edith!
Whatever powers this creep has are neutralized.
You hear that? No deal, creep!
No deal!

Please step away from the aristocrat.
I know he's an insufferable boor, and normally I'd let you ladies work...
...but he's *our* insufferable boor. So...
...now I have to work.
Urff!

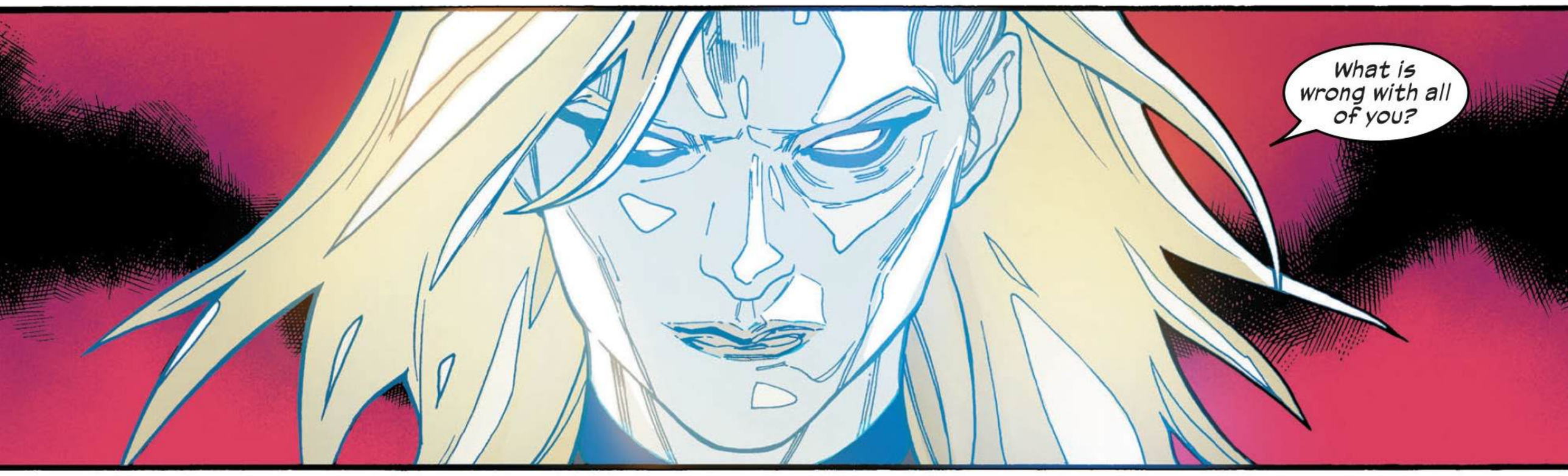
Are we done now?
Oh God. Oh Lord.
Oh sweet Jesus.
Dammit.
Are you okay?
My hip.
You broke my hip.
Okay, hold still and I'll...


ACKK!

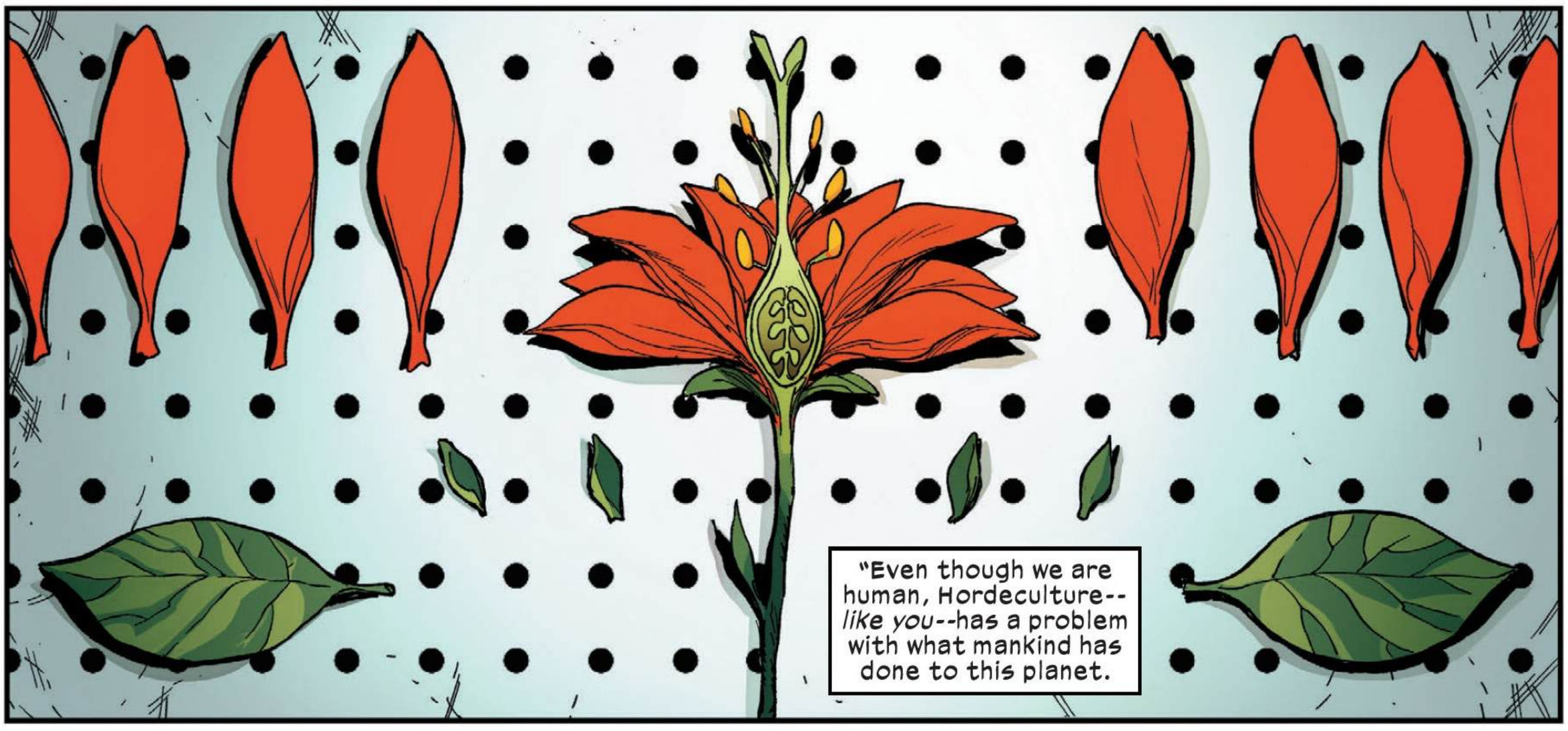
Stupid boy!
We do water aerobics and yoga four days a week at the Y-M-C-A.

Our instructor's name is Sven. He's from Sweden and in better shape than you are!

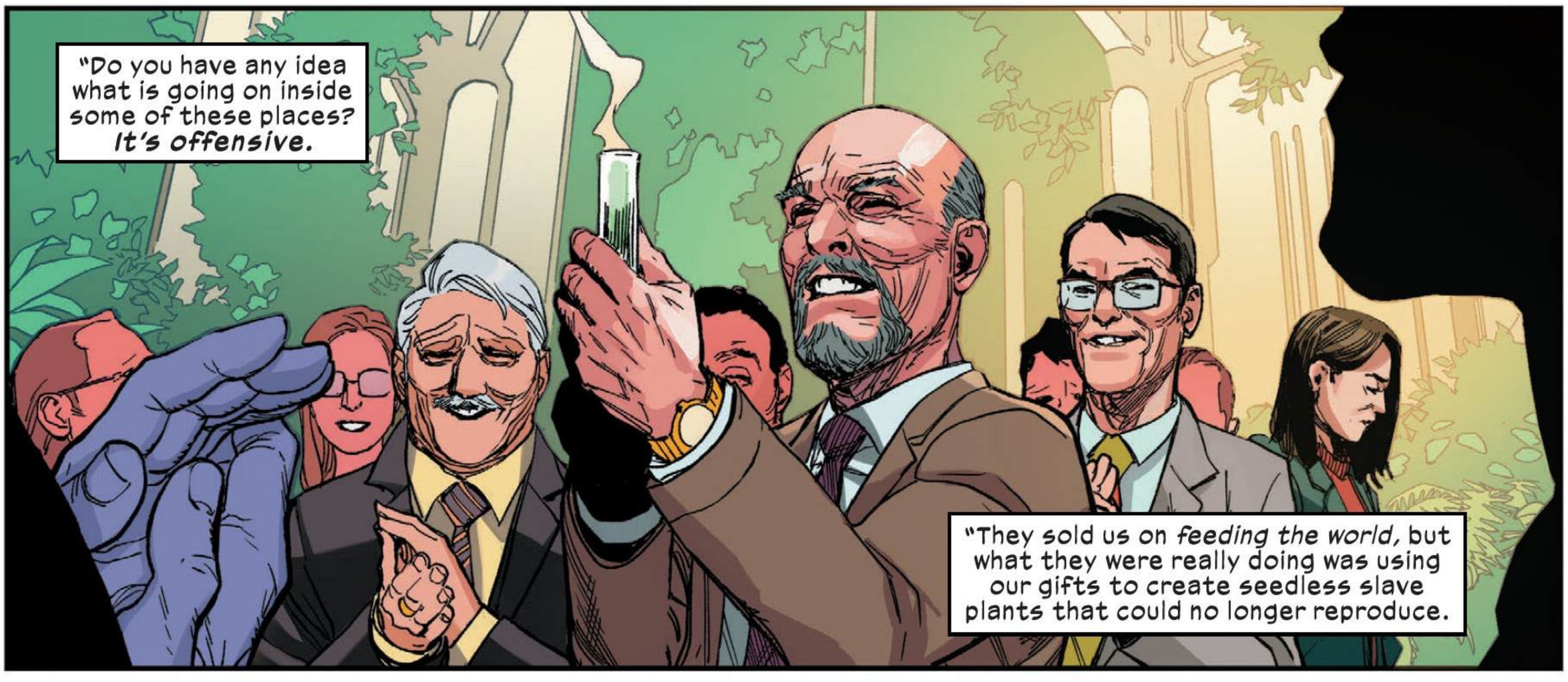
ENOUGH!

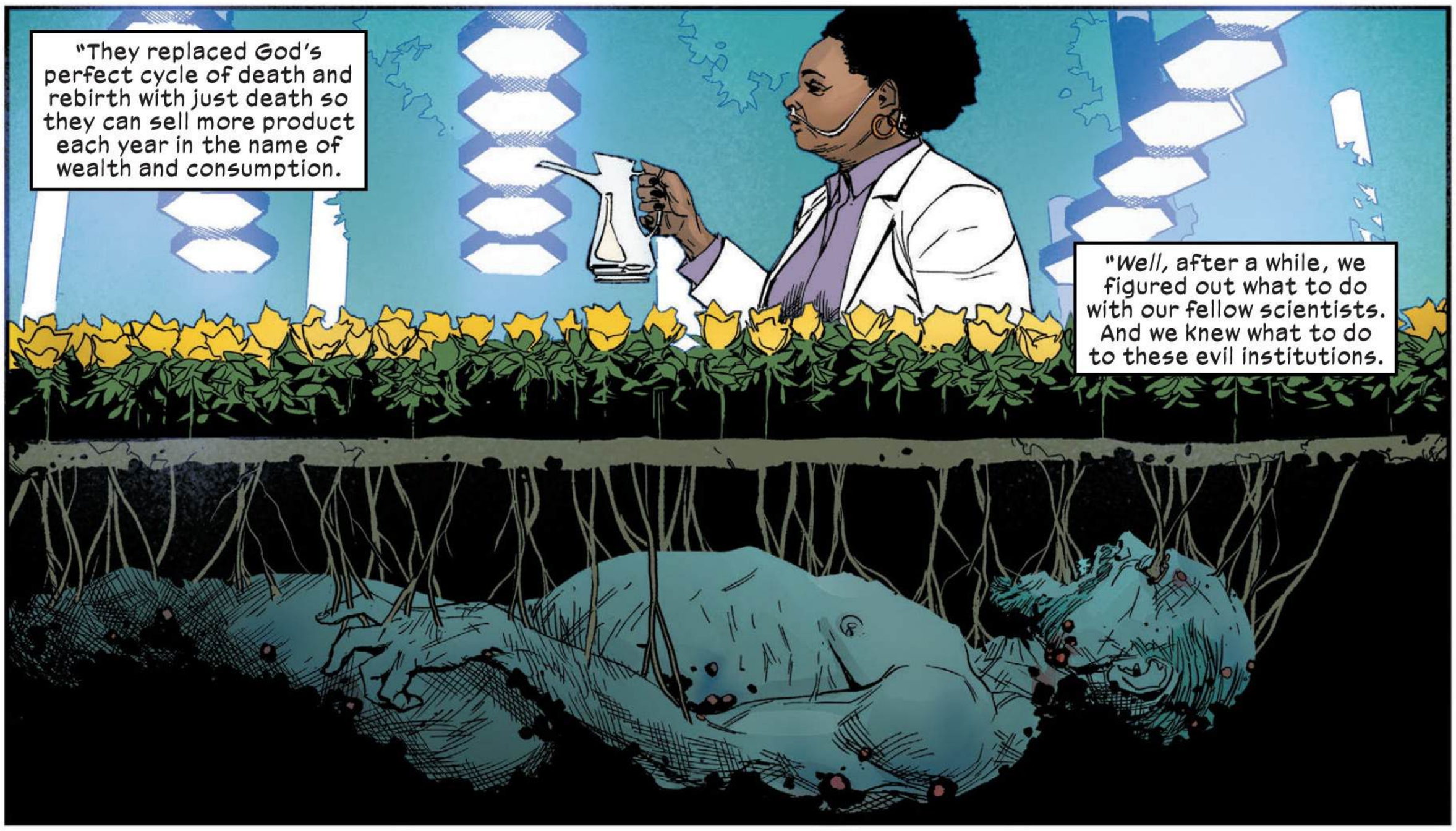

What is wrong with all of you?

Well...
You are, girly.
You mutants are screwing up our plan.

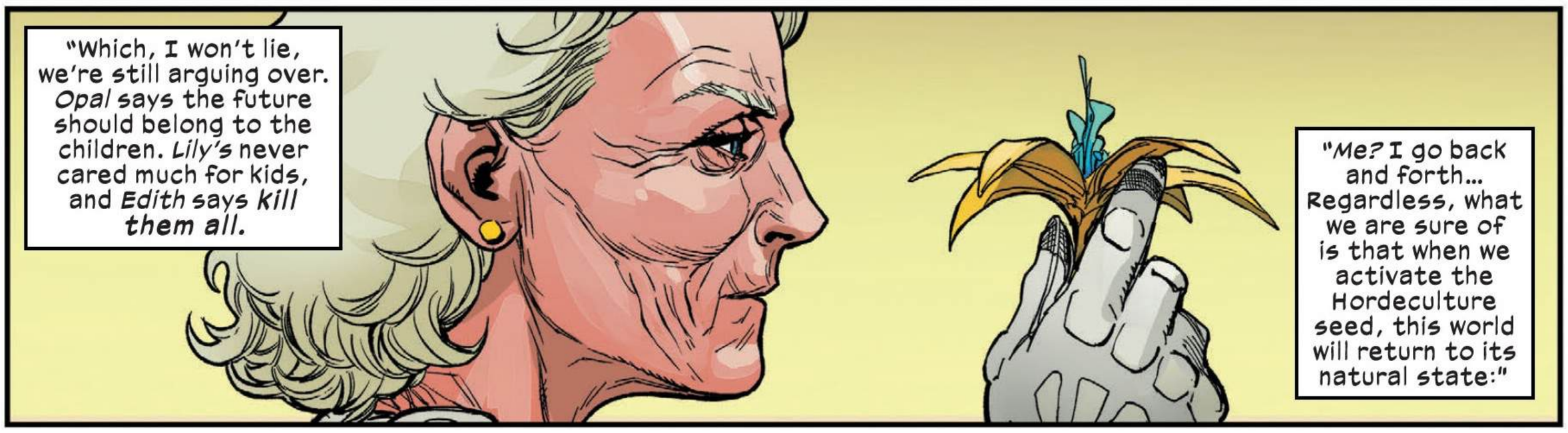

"Even though we are human, Hordeculture--like you--has a problem with what mankind has done to this planet.

"We are--all of us--radical botanists--gardeners with the gift of the green thumb--who are committed to returning this world to its proper state.
"The four of us have collectively spent more than two hundred years working for the world's best agrochemical and biotech companies.


"Do you have any idea what is going on inside some of these places? It's offensive.
"They sold us on feeding the world, but what they were really doing was using our gifts to create seedless slave plants that could no longer reproduce.

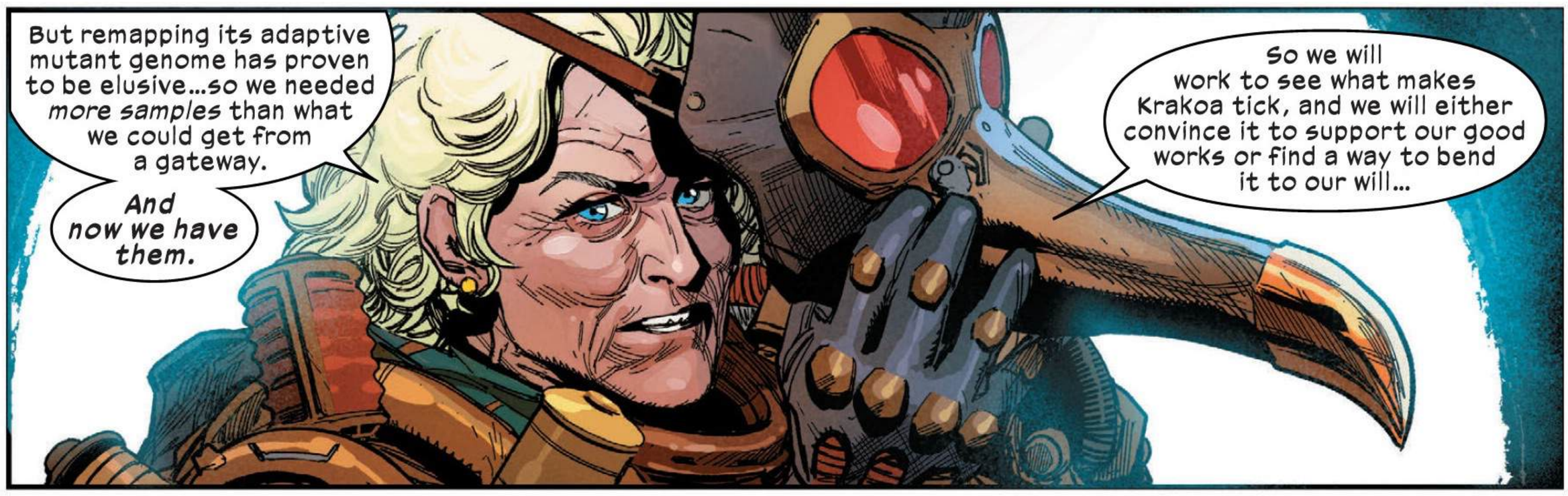

"They replaced God's perfect cycle of death and rebirth with just death so they can sell more product each year in the name of wealth and consumption.
"*Well,* after a while, we figured out what to do with our fellow scientists. And we knew what to do to these evil institutions.

"For the last two years, we've very carefully sown the Hordeculture seed in with theirs. And in ten years, we will control all of the world's food supply.
"We will decide what grows and what does not. We will decide who eats and who starves.

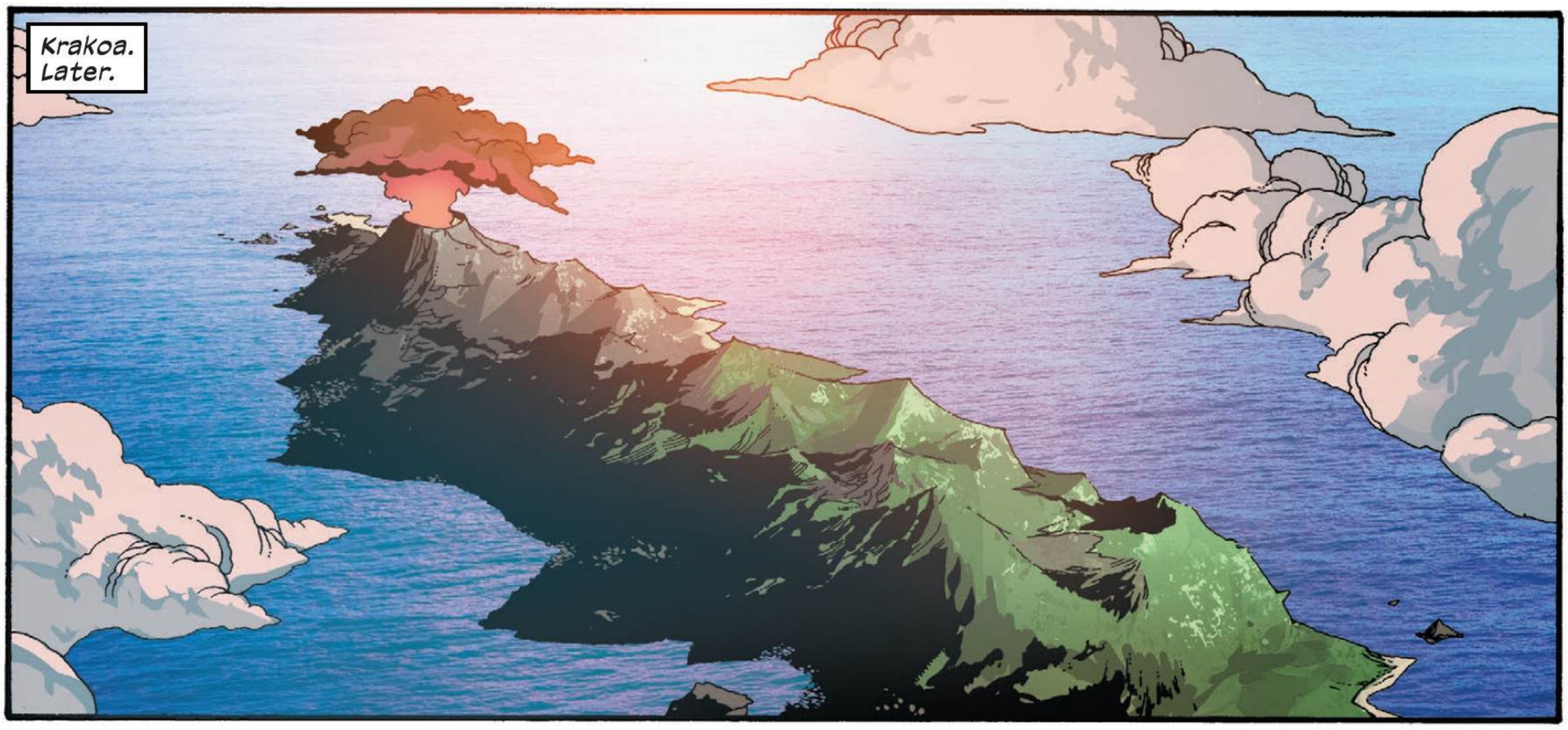

"Which, I won't lie, we're still arguing over. *Opal* says the future should belong to the children. *Lily's* never cared much for kids, and *Edith* says ***kill them all.***
"*Me?* I go back and forth... Regardless, what we are sure of is that when we activate the Hordeculture seed, this world will return to its natural state:"

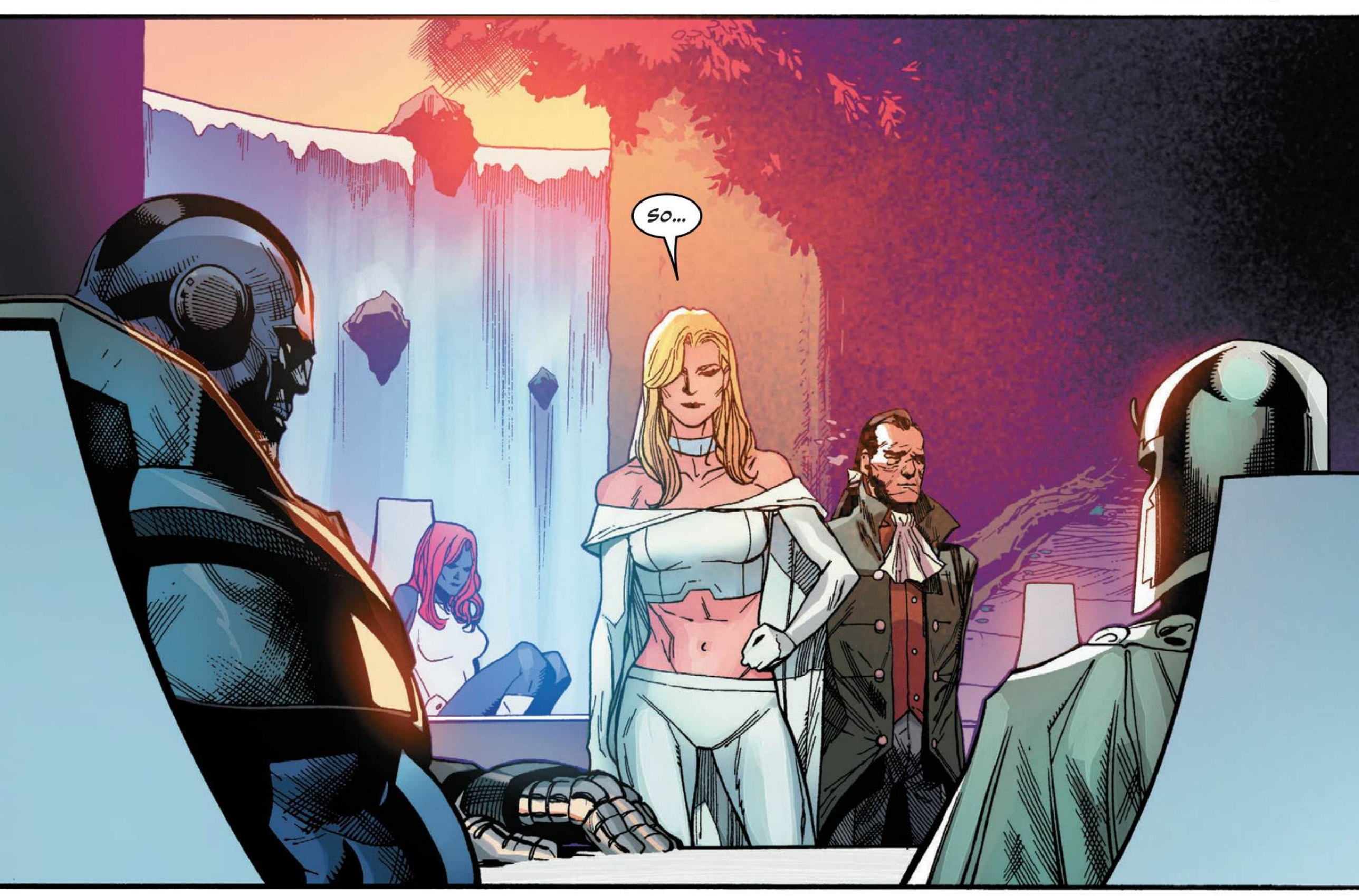
POP POP POP
*An Earth with seven billion fewer people on it.*
*At least that was our plan...*

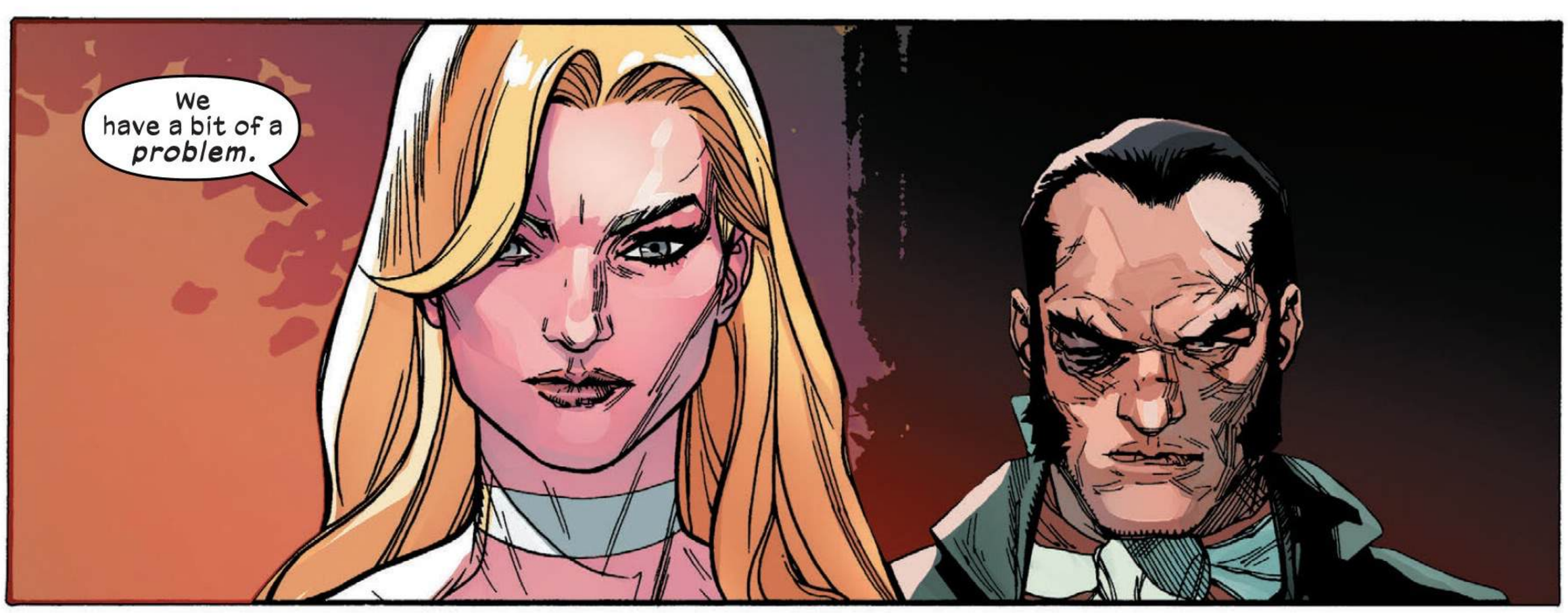
But then you showed up with your living island--*an expansive biome beyond our current understanding*--that could very well circumvent our plans.
The good news is that good ol' human ingenuity is alive and well, and it didn't take us too long to hack it.
Anytime we like, we can interrupt its normal functions and take control of your method of transit--which, *I will not lie*, is a boon for us.
ZZRRNNNN


But remapping its adaptive mutant genome has proven to be elusive...so we needed *more samples* than what we could get from a gateway.
***And now we have them.***
So we will work to see what makes Krakoa tick, and we will either convince it to support our good works or find a way to bend it to our will...

And if it can do ***neither...*** then we'll find a way to ***pluck it like the weed it is.***
You can bet your a-word on that.
*Just so you know, Gateway...*
*...you were **a lot** of help.*


Krakoa.
Later.


So...


We have a bit of a *problem.*

# HORDECULTURE IS:



A collaborative group of like-minded agrochemists, biotechnologists and bioengineers who specialize in the genetic manipulation of -- and propagation of -- all things botanical. Their goal is the radical depopulation of humanity and the return of the planet to what they would consider a more pristine state.

Beyond genetic modifications believed to have been made to themselves [unconfirmed outside of a documented resistance to telepathy], the women of Hordeculture are experts at manipulating the environment to suit their extinction agenda.

While it is unknown if there are more than four members of Hordeculture, the known existing members are:

**AUGUSTA BROMES**
Agrochemist, 64 years old.
Best friends with Opal.

**OPAL VETIVER**
Bioengineer, 68 years old.
Best friends with Augusta.

**LILY LEYMUS**
Geneticist, 71 years old.
Thinks she's best friends with Opal but isn't.

**EDITH SCUTCH**
Botanical engineer, 81 years old.
Don't need friends, don't want 'em.

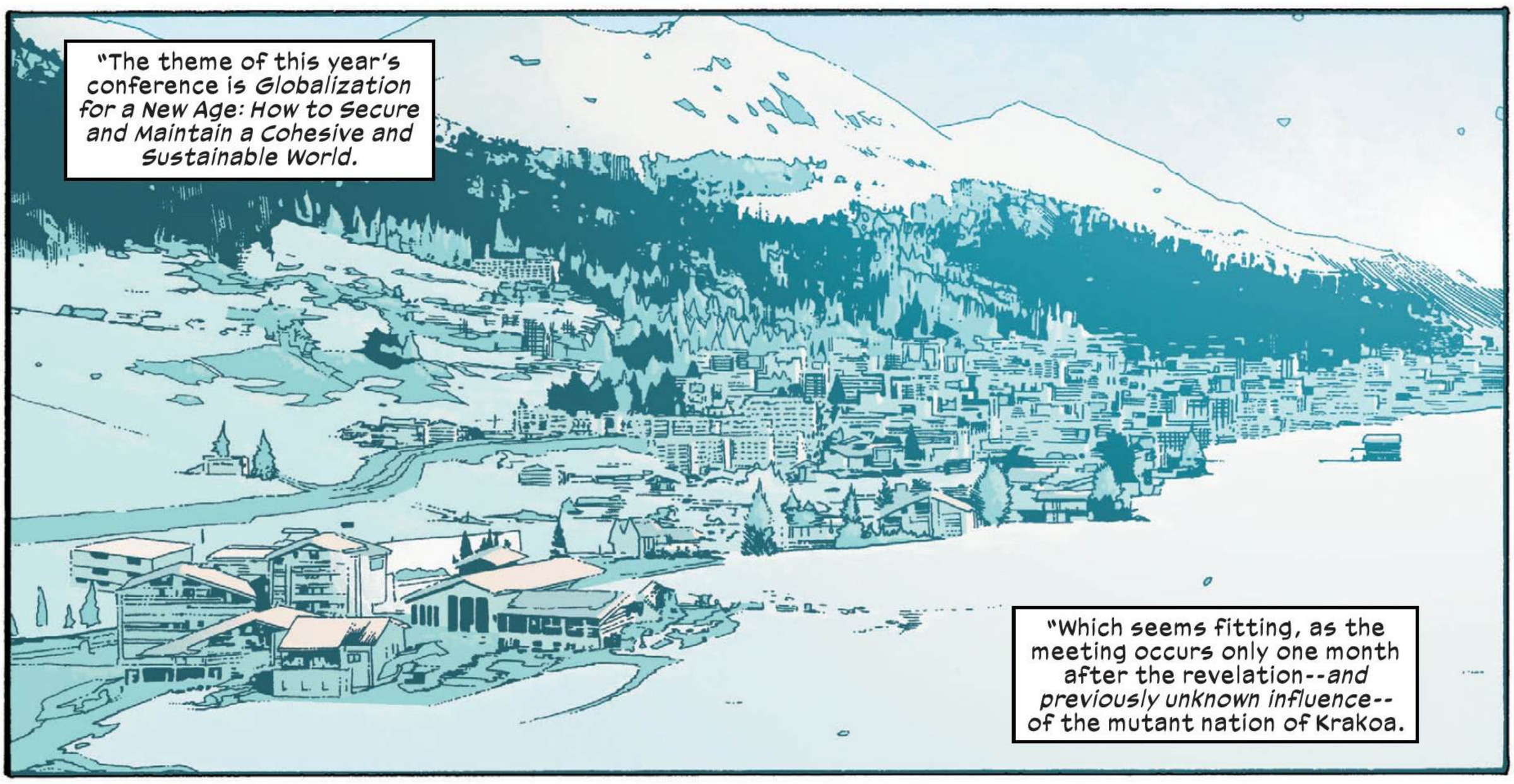
—

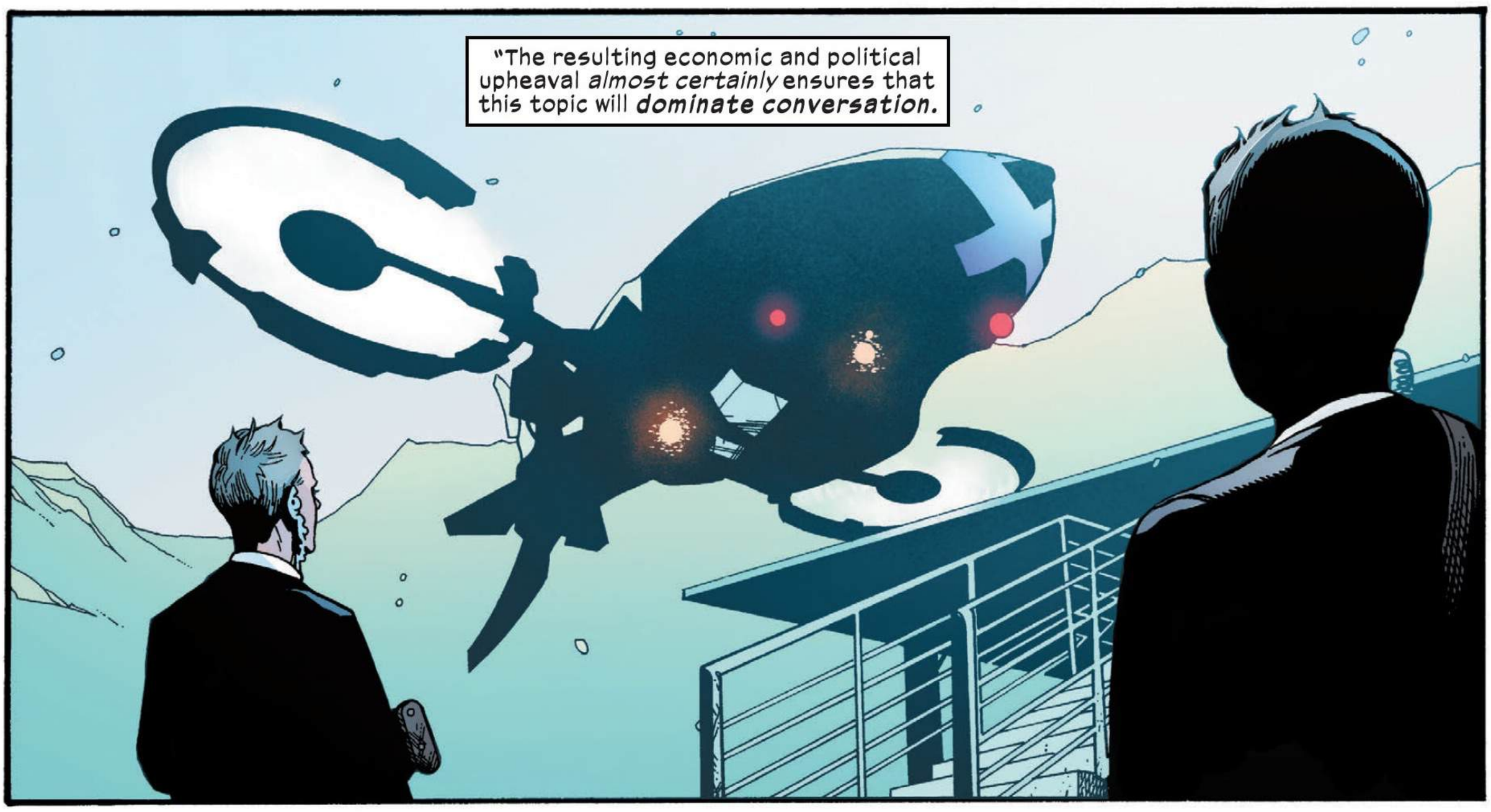
*The Green Thumb is a mobile base of operations designed and built by Edith. It is currently located in Sedona, Arizona, but will move when the current lunar cycle completes.*

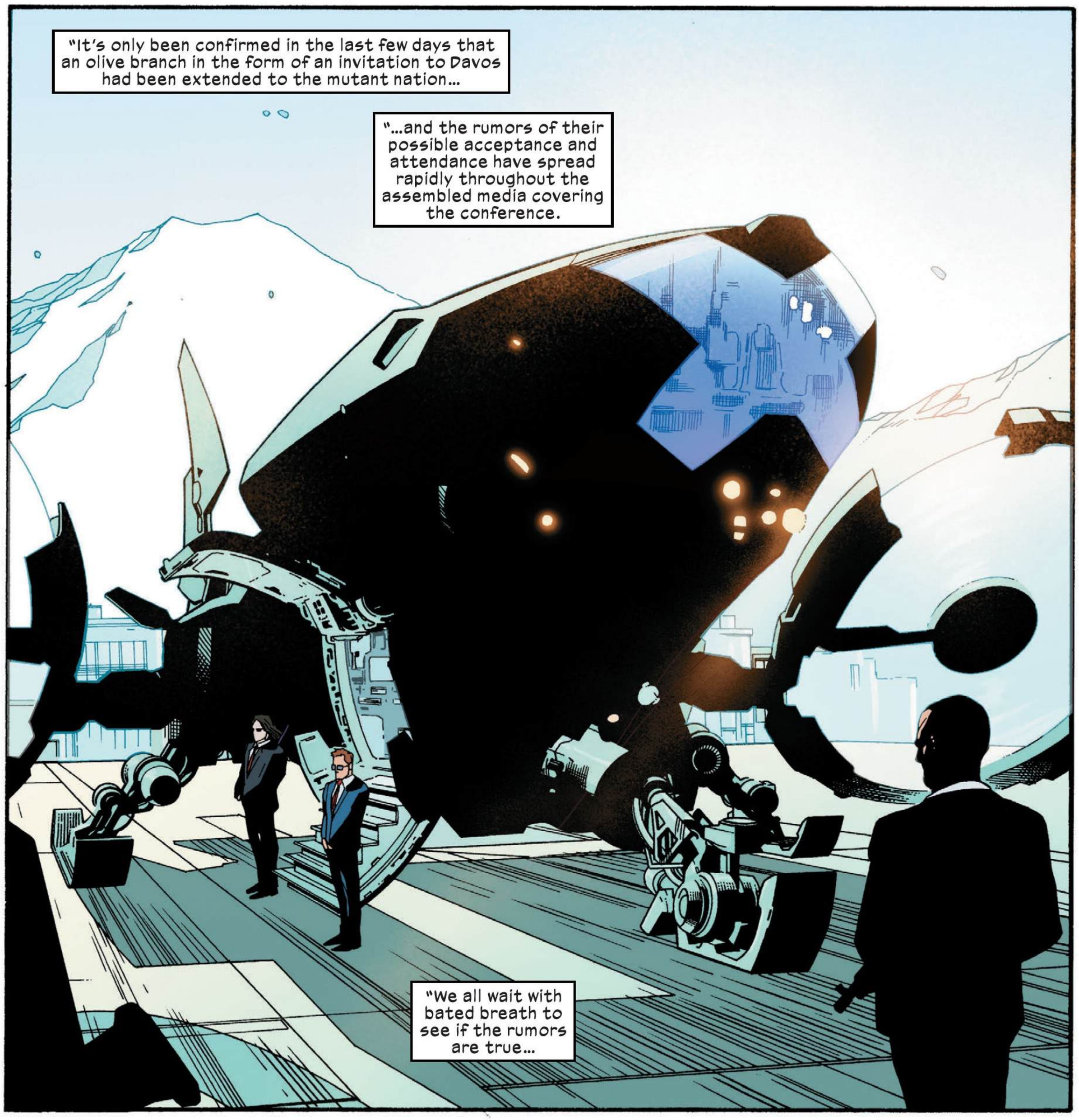
# Global Economics

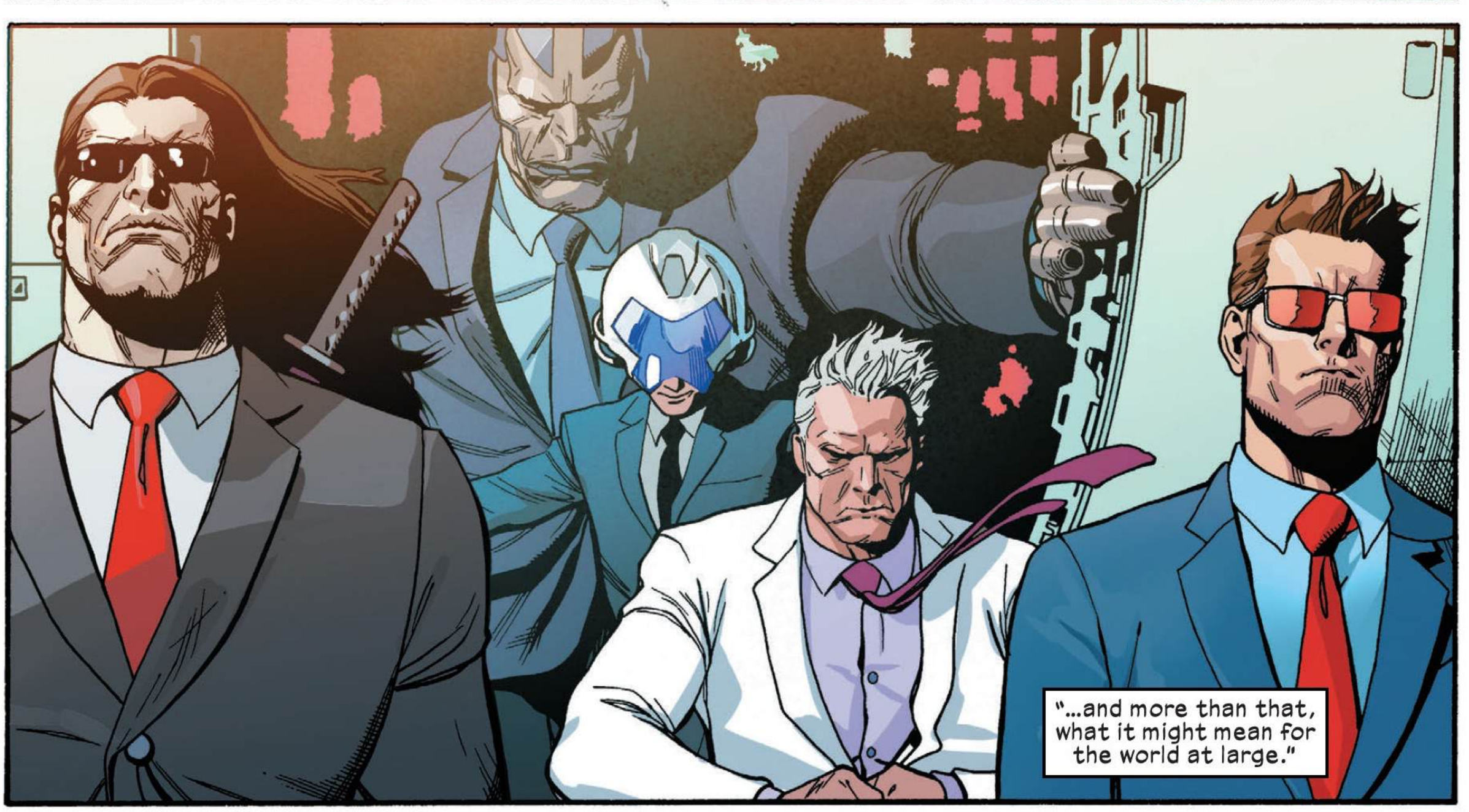
# 4

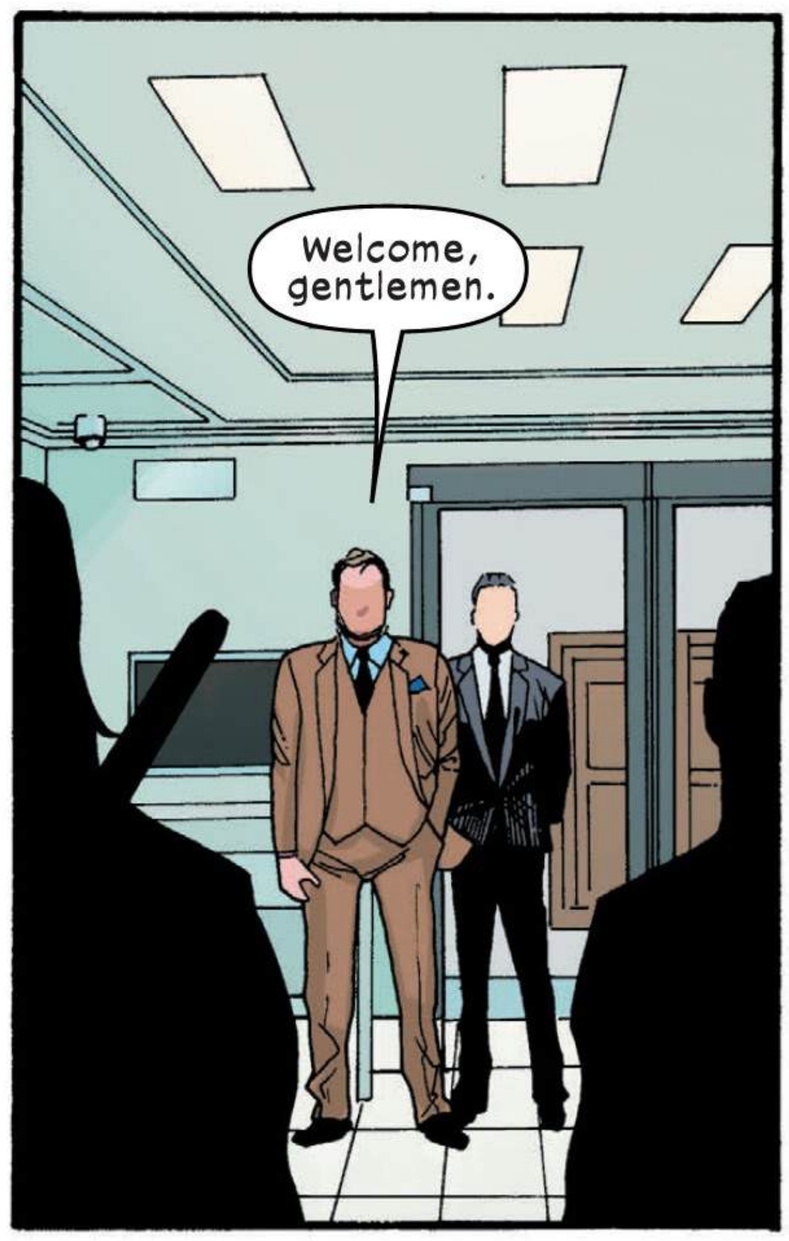
Davos, Switzerland.
"This week, thousands of world leaders, economic titans, celebrities and philanthropists have gathered for the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum.


"The theme of this year's conference is *Globalization for a New Age: How to Secure and Maintain a Cohesive and Sustainable World.*
"Which seems fitting, as the meeting occurs only one month after the revelation--*and previously unknown influence*--of the mutant nation of Krakoa.

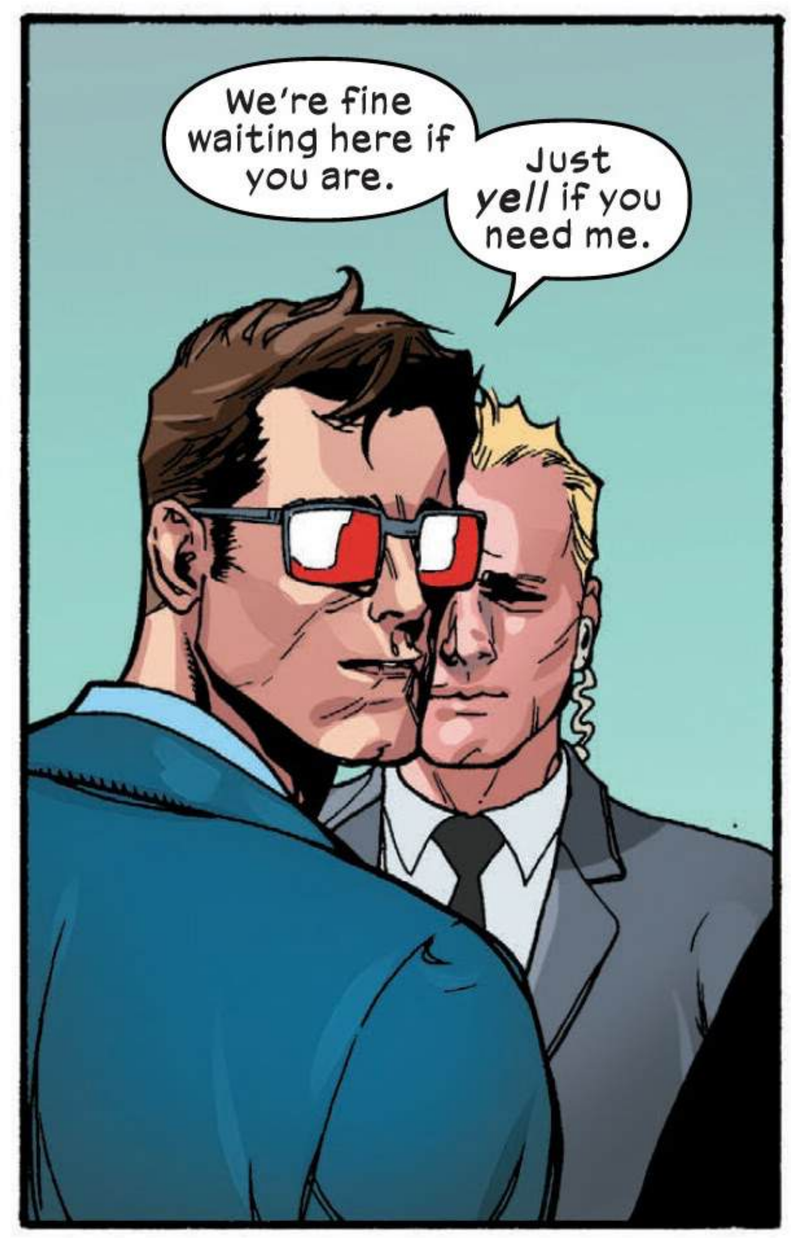

"The resulting economic and political upheaval *almost certainly* ensures that this topic will ***dominate conversation.***

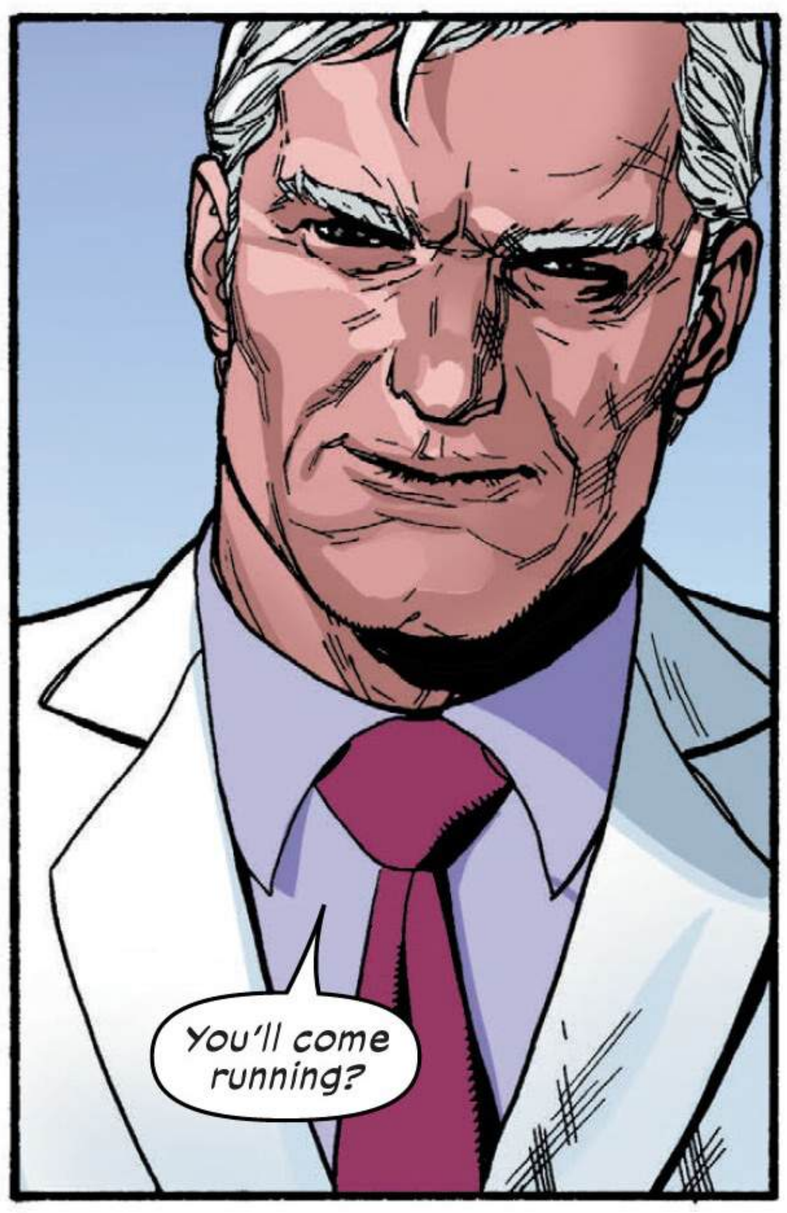

"It's only been confirmed in the last few days that an olive branch in the form of an invitation to Davos had been extended to the mutant nation...
"...and the rumors of their possible acceptance and attendance have spread rapidly throughout the assembled media covering the conference.
"We all wait with bated breath to see if the rumors are true...


"...and more than that, what it might mean for the world at large."


Welcome, gentlemen.

I apologize--*but while many of our guests require a heightened level of personal security*--we cannot allow such personnel inside any actual meetings.
It's the same for everyone. I hope you understand.


We're fine waiting here if you are.
Just *yell* if you need me.


*You'll come running?*

I might take my time.
Enjoy the ***sights.*** Rub elbows with my ***betters.***

This way, gentlemen. Your party is waiting for you.

You two can stay here with me, but you're going to have to surrender the swords.
*Obviously,* we allow security to carry weapons, but something that...*overt* is a ***problem.***

The ***problem*** is that you look at me and think the blade is the weapon.

Bit of advice, friend: *I'd let this go.*
But don't worry, we'll be on our ***best behavior.***

After all, what is dinner but elevated conversation among *friends?*

World Economic Forum

# DINNER MENU

*Watermelon Gazpacho*
*Infused with Habanero and Poblano Chiles*

+

*Shredded Kale,*
*Mushrooms, Bacon, Parmesan*

+

*Olive Wagyu*
*[Kagawa Prefecture]*
*Colbert Sauce*

+

*Brioche Tressée de Metz*

## IN ATTENDANCE:

### KRAKOAN COUNCIL

Charles Xavier.....Professor X
Erik Lehnsherr.....Magneto
En Sabah Nur.....Apocalypse

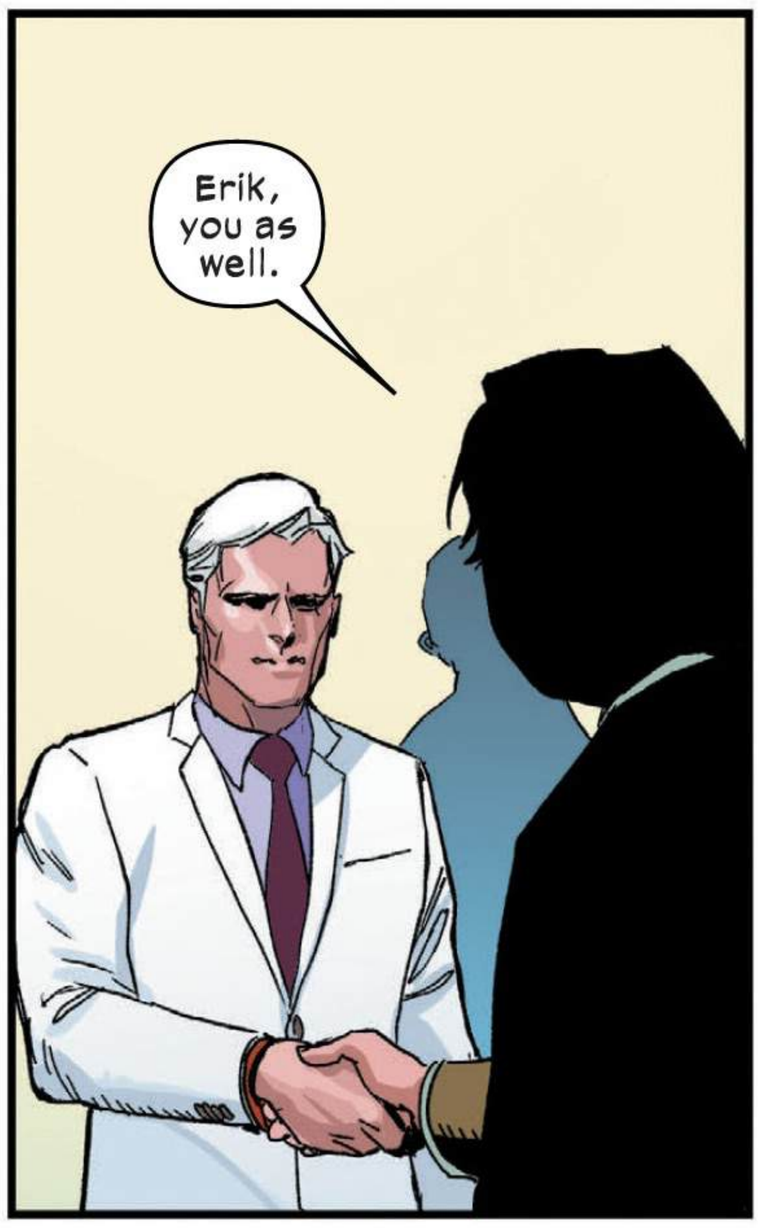
### POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES

Hodari.....Wakandan Attaché
Ma Mingyu.....Chinese Ambassador
Reilly Marshall.....U.S. Ambassador

### INTERNATIONAL GUESTS

Frederico João de Cézare.....Brazil.....[Academic]
Daniela Gentile.....Italy.....[Business]
Ludovic von Bergen.....Switzerland.....[Business]
Banhi Gahlot.....India.....[Business]

Charles, thank you for coming.


Erik, you as well.

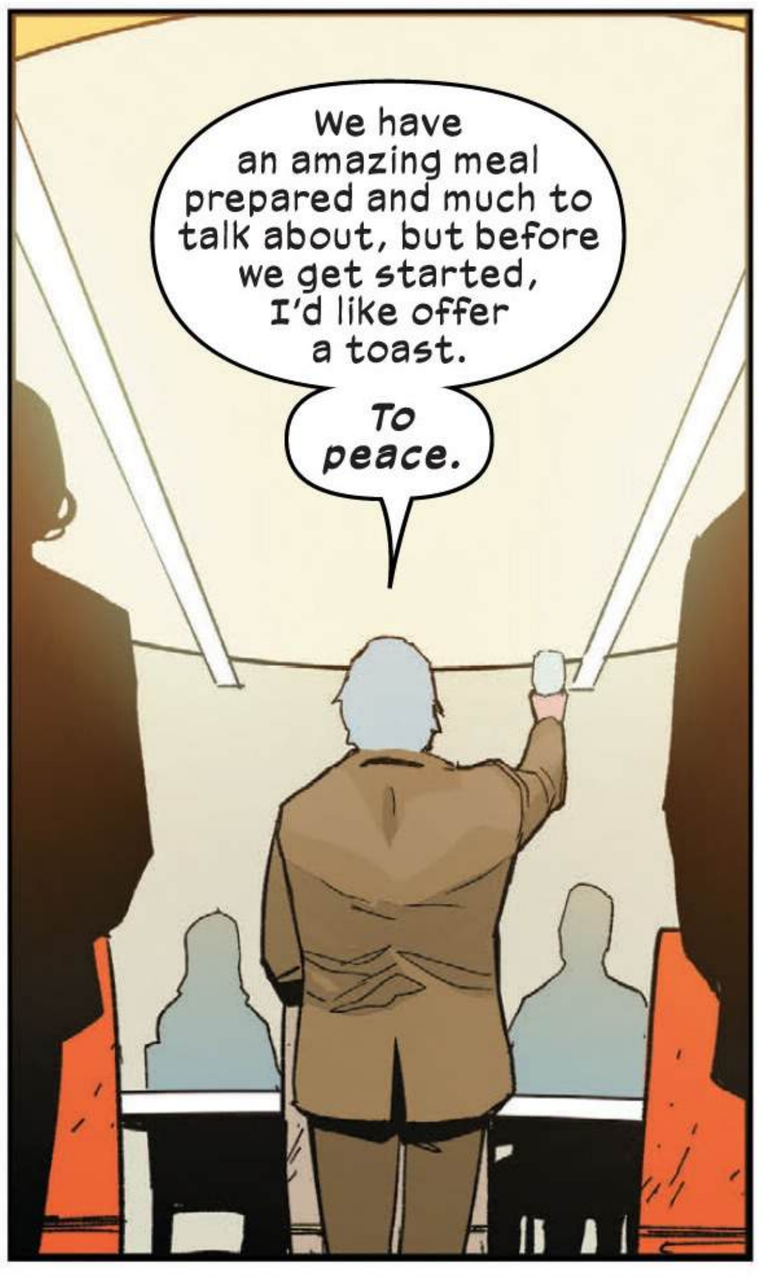
Thank you for having us.
This all looks very nice.

Well, we're happy to have you and even happier you accepted our invitation.

And thanks to you as well, uh...
Should I call you En Sabah? Or Mister Nur, perhaps?

I am Apocalypse.
My other names are not fit for you to utter.

Apocalypse it is, then. Regardless... welcome.


We have an amazing meal prepared and much to talk about, but before we get started, I'd like offer a toast.
To peace.

To peace.

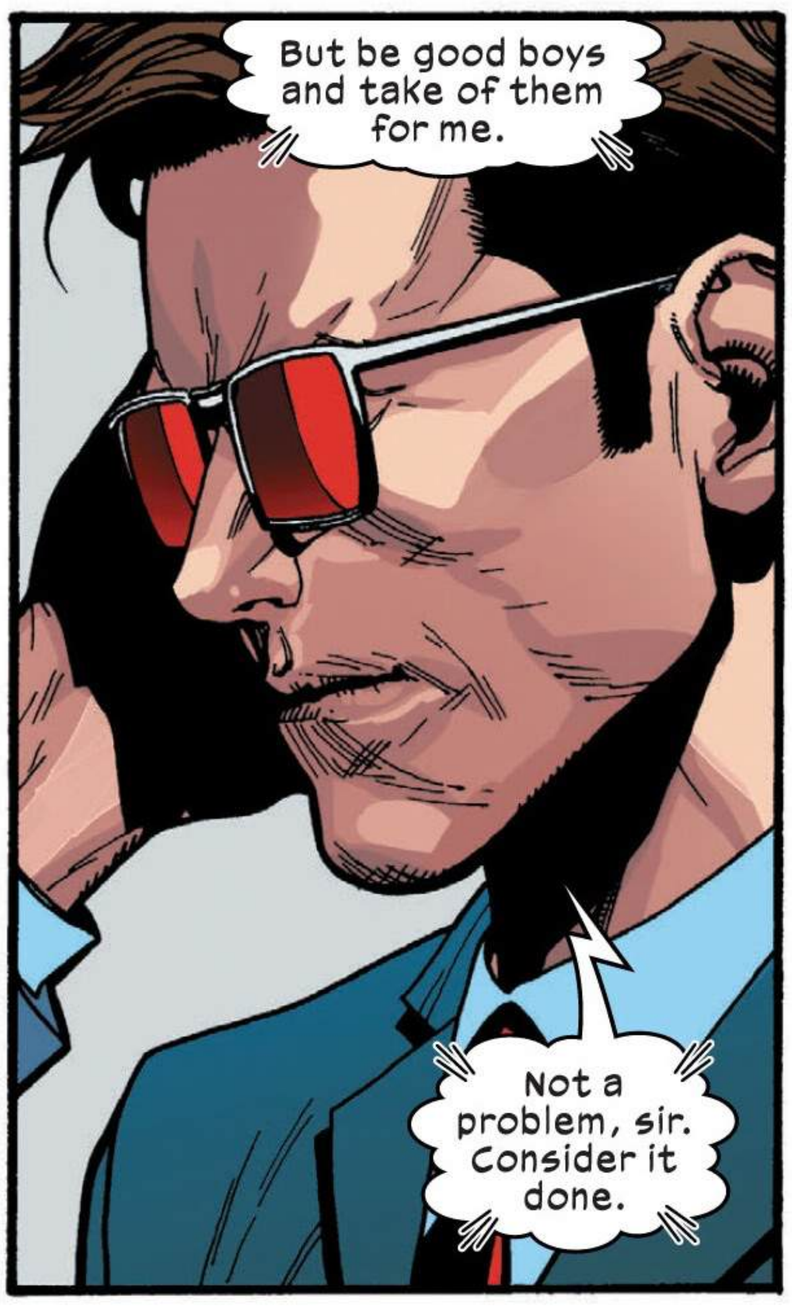
This thing itches.

What the hell are you doing? Don't touch that, it's the only thing keeping them outta your head.
You didn't break contact with your skin, did you?
No. I don't think so.

Here you are, sir.
A Watermelon gazpacho infused with habanero and poblano chiles.

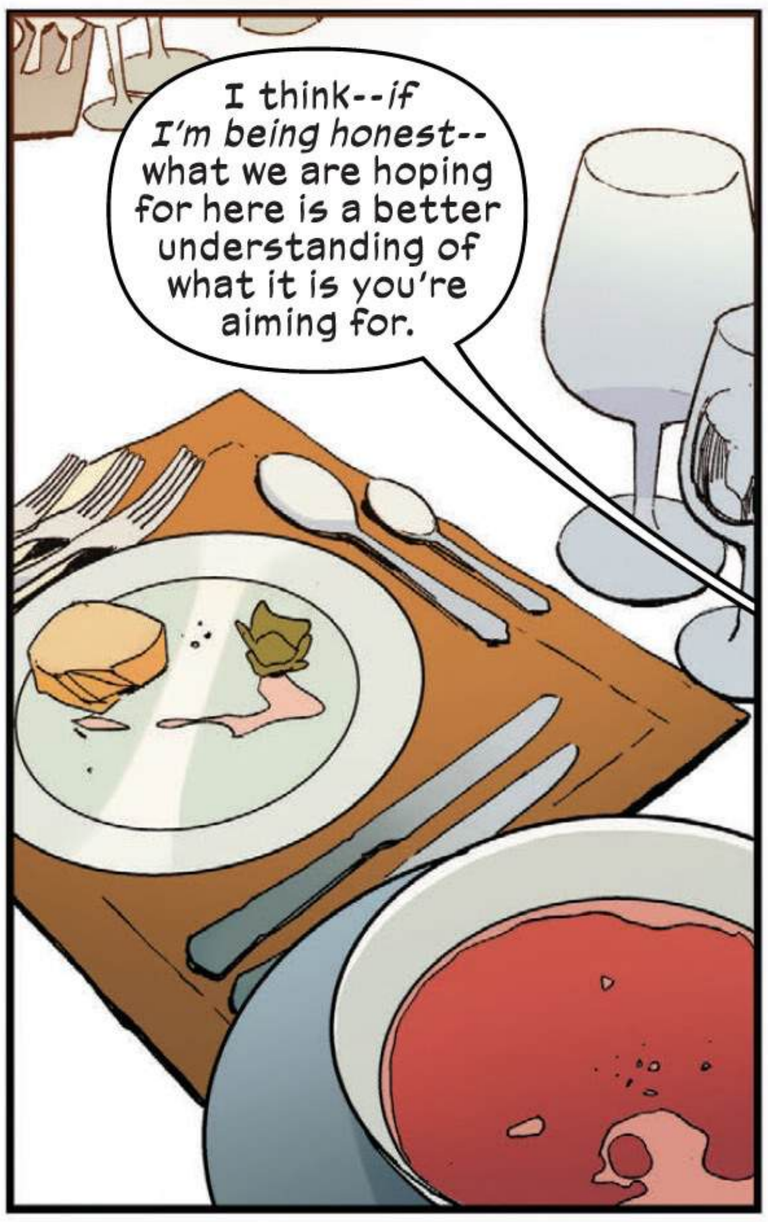
Thank you.
Scott? Tomi?

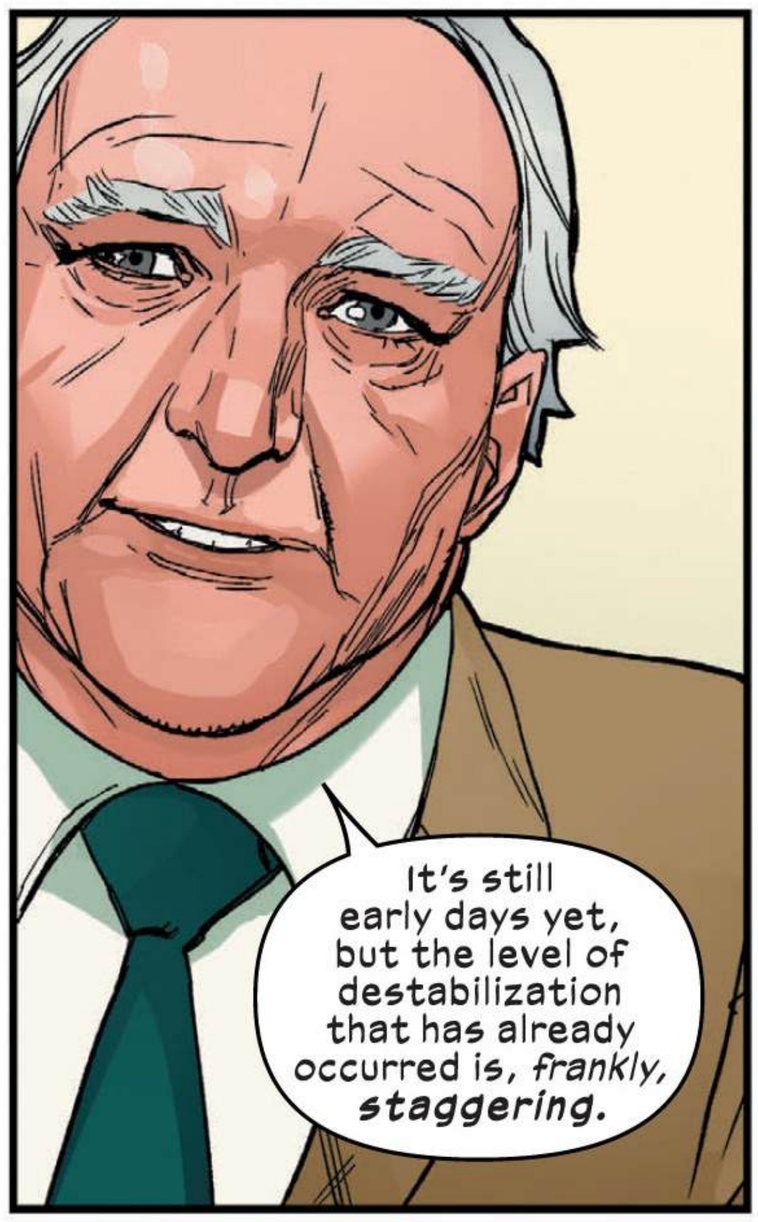
Yes, Professor?
There are two assault teams waiting to converge on our position. One is located on the floor above us, the other the floor below.
They're shielded again, so that's all the help I can offer...


But be good boys and take of them for me.
Not a problem, sir. Consider it done.

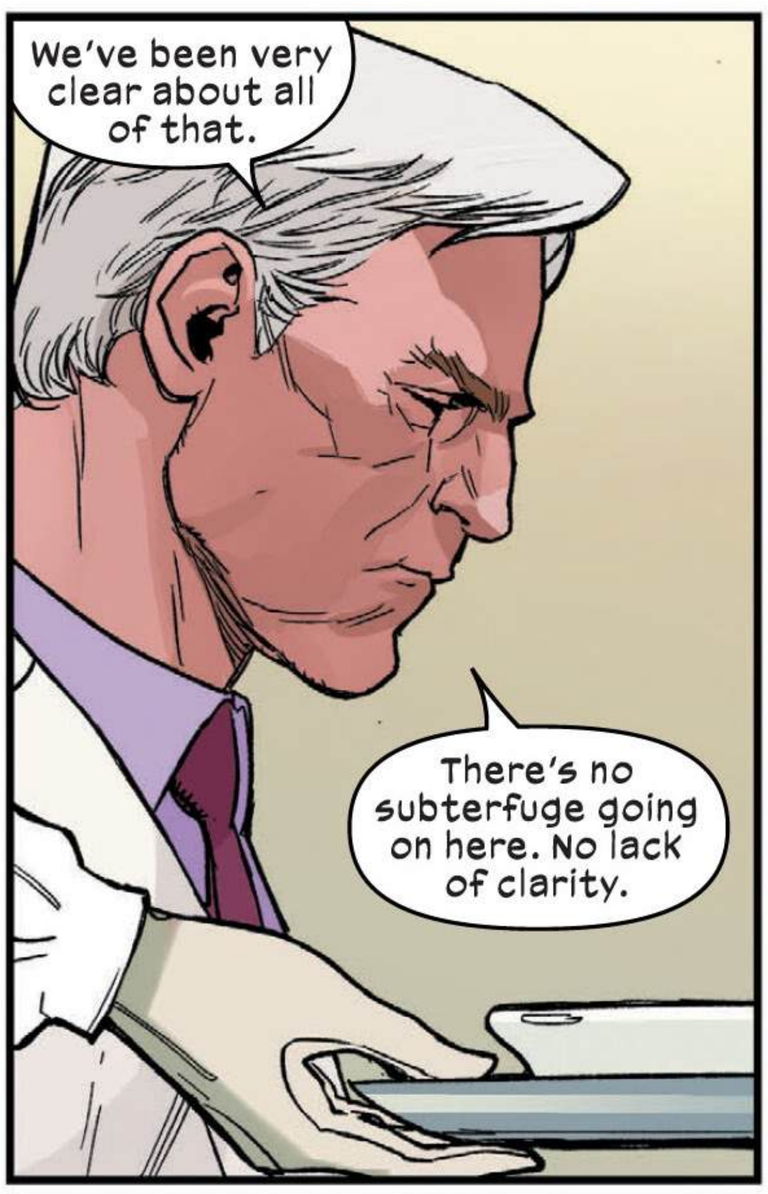
Why are you both looking at me like that?

I have bad news on the mutant good behavior front.
Friend.


I think--*if I'm being honest*--what we are hoping for here is a better understanding of what it is you're aiming for.


It's still early days yet, but the level of destabilization that has already occurred is, *frankly*, ***staggering.***

Yes. And our question is: *What does this look like years from now?*
What's the ***end-game?***


We've been very clear about all of that.
There's no subterfuge going on here. No lack of clarity.

And if that eventually becomes untenable?
The effect the existence of Krakoa has on the world?

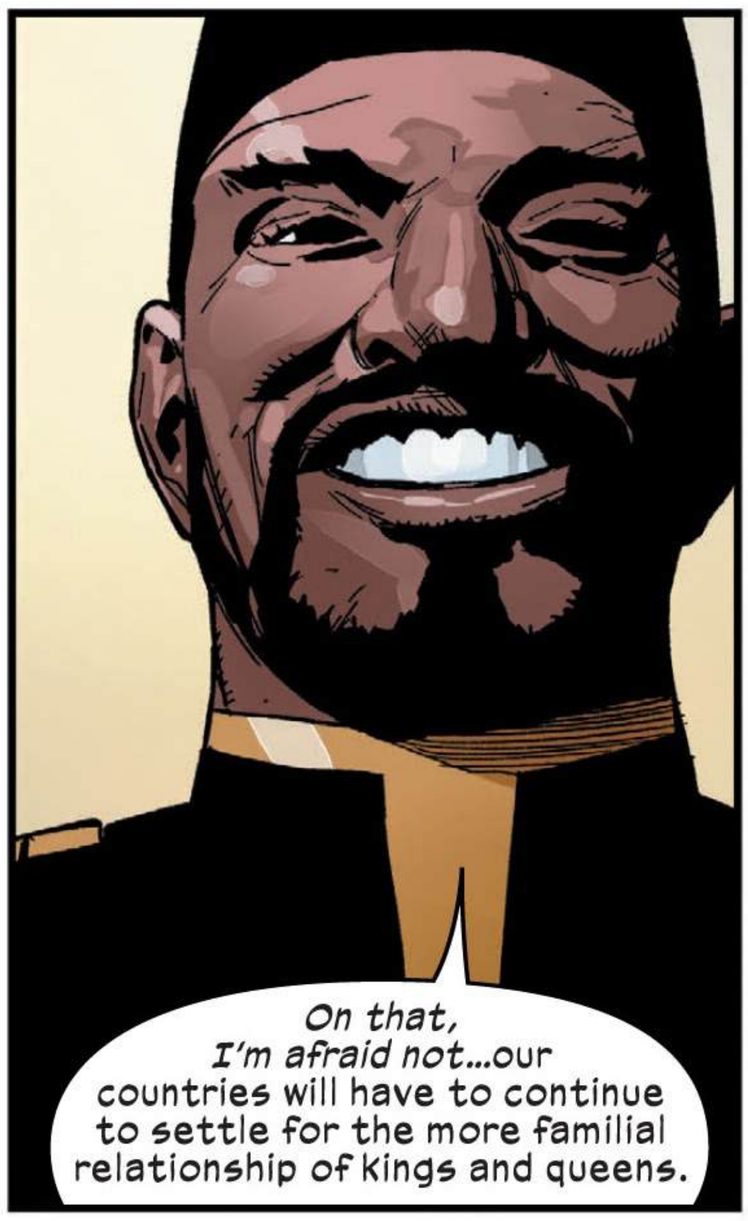
*Well...*
I believe in adaptation. You might even say it's my religion.

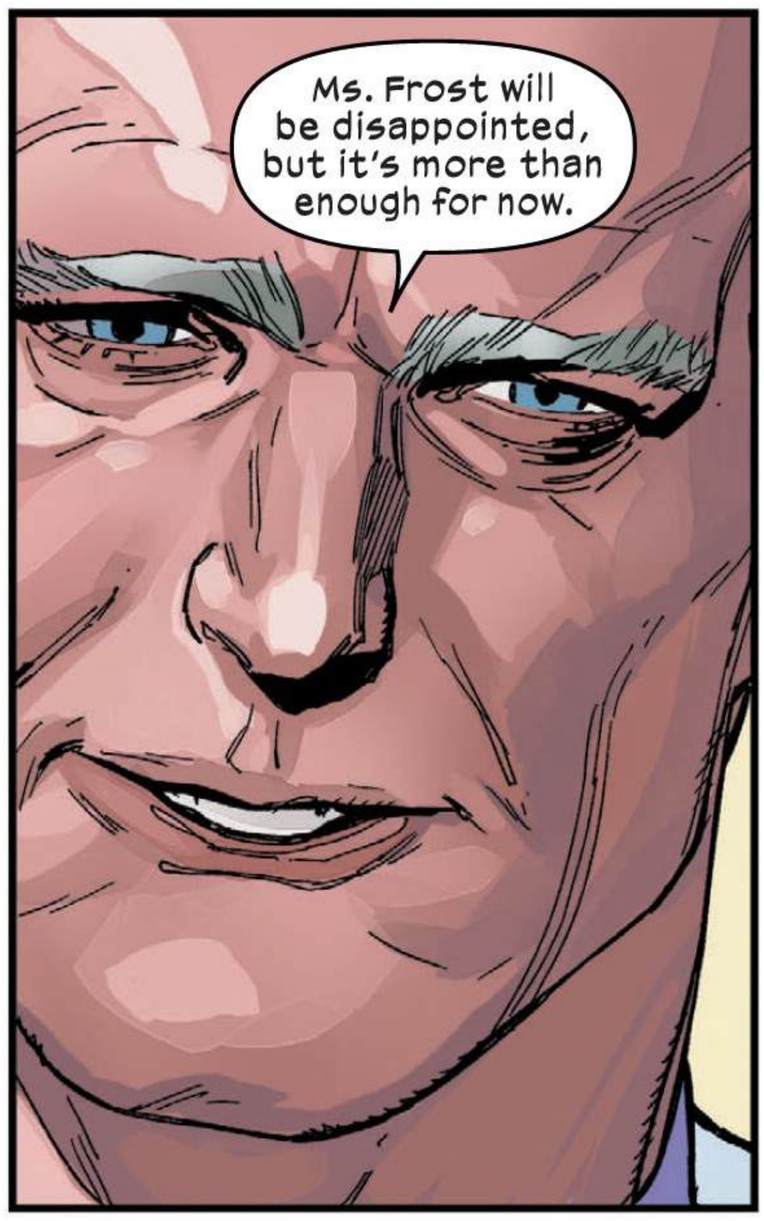
And if that's not enough--*I honestly don't know what comfort I can give you.* Everyone needs to accept the new normal of Krakoa.

I think we shouldn't act surprised.
A nation will act in its own best interest. This is neither new behavior nor unexpected. We have seen it all before.

And it would be... *dishonest* to pretend that our countries don't do the same.
We find ways around it. *We always do.* Call it common ground, *if you will.*

If that's your position, dare I ask if Wakanda is now interested in a more formal trade relationship with Krakoa?


On that, I'm afraid not...our countries will have to continue to settle for the more familial relationship of kings and queens.


Ms. Frost will be disappointed, but it's more than enough for now.

Speaking of disappointments, trade relationships often yield a deeper relationship with a nation's people...yet your **border** continues to be **closed** to most of us.
How can the deeper lure of trust be formed in isolation?

To put it a bit more bluntly.
How can we trust you to be part of the world if you spend your time **hiding** from us on your **island?**

Does this feel like we're hiding?

"Can we talk more about the drugs?"

Of course.

You're going to have to forgive our curiosity, but we've all had quite a few of our best scientists looking at them, *and...well...*

We're not sure how to say this without sounding accusatory, but we're not sure that--*for some of your drugs*--the weekly regimen is necessary.

I'm not an expert, but I do know enough about them to say that *you're wrong...*

"There's a cascading effect over time, and the way we've structured it mitigates the negative effects.

"But even if this were not true--*if we chose to deliver the medicine in the most profitable manner possible*--it would just be a lesson you've taught us."

*"Armaments, universal debt and planned obsolescence--are these not the three pillars of Western prosperity?"*

...
That's Huxley, right?

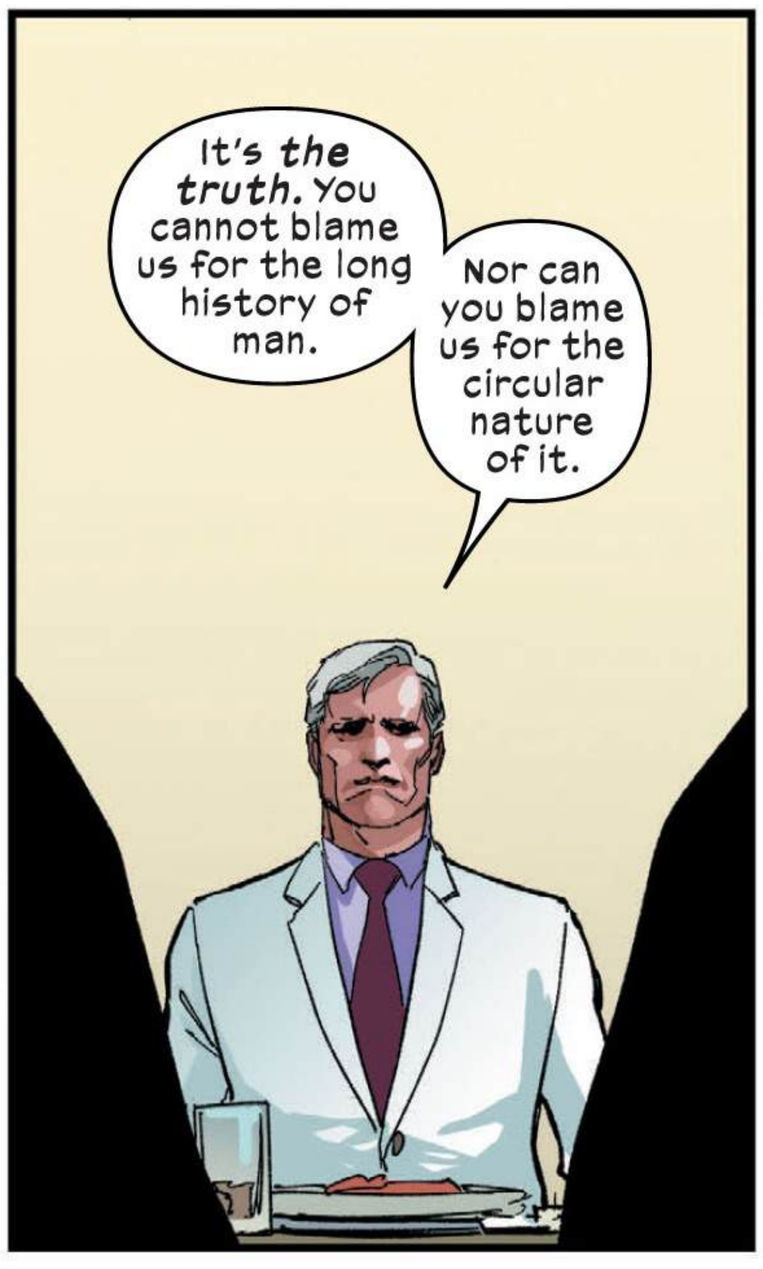
It's not just Huxley. He's quoting *The Island.*
Which--*all things considered*--is just perfect. ***Well done.***

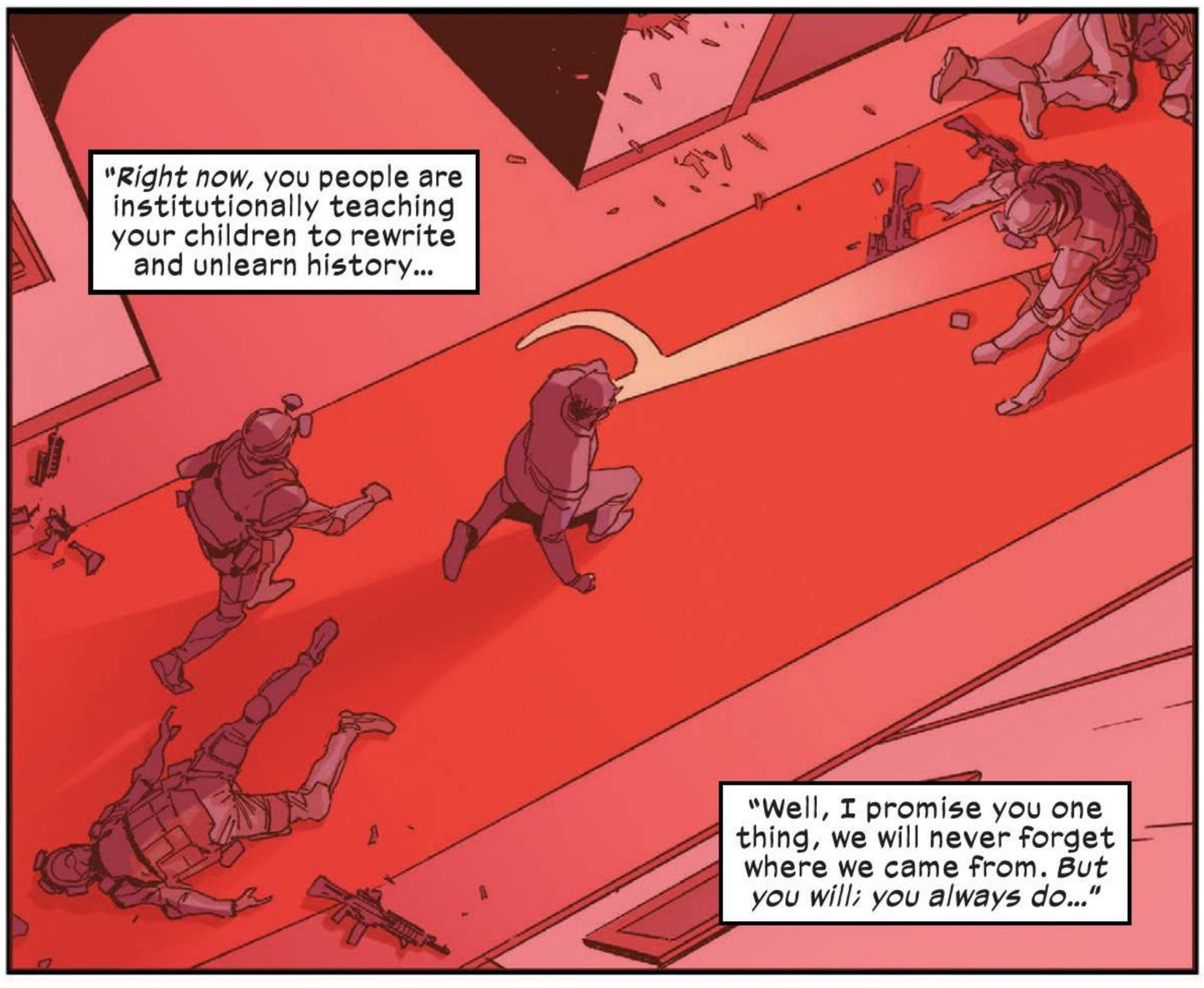
Thank you.

I find it mildly amusing that to make your point you have to quote a human author.
*Then again,* there aren't any famous mutant authors, *are there?*

*Not yet.* But there will be. ***I'm sure of it.***
*After all,* it's in the air, lately--the ***breaking*** of ***human norms.***

Well, that *sounds ominous.*

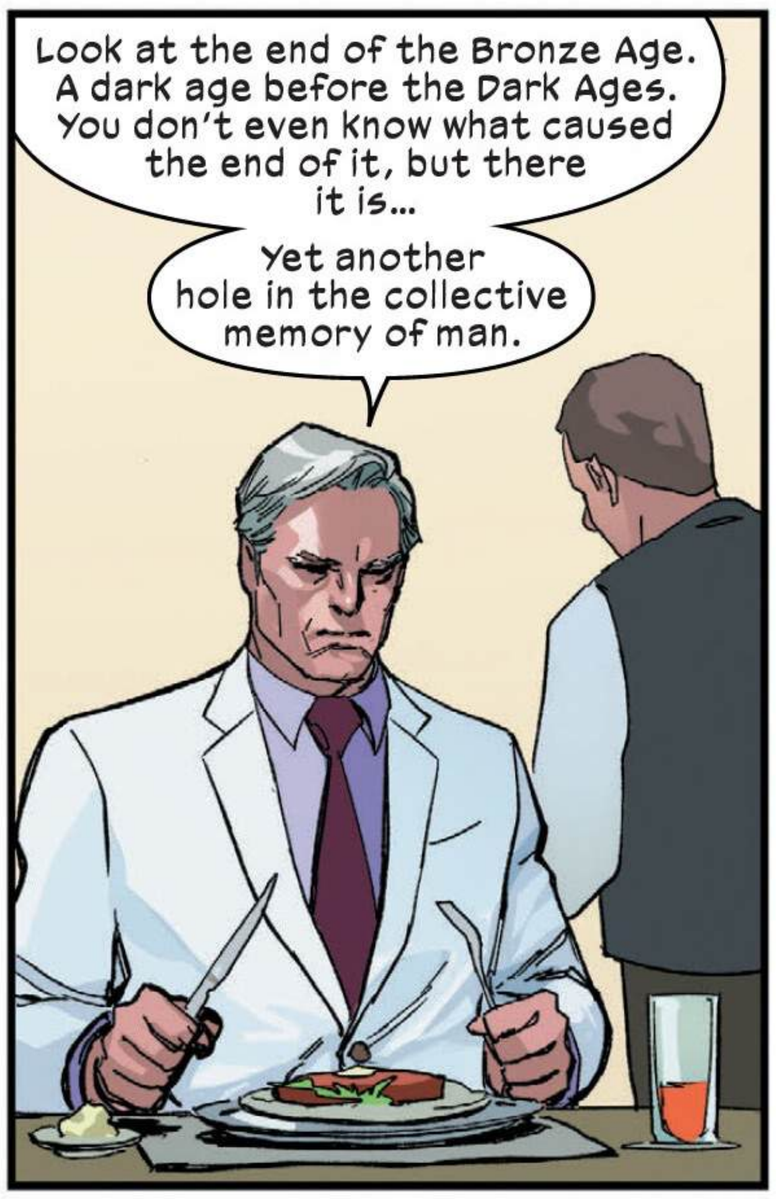

It's ***the truth.*** You cannot blame us for the long history of man.
Nor can you blame us for the circular nature of it.


"*Right now,* you people are institutionally teaching your children to rewrite and unlearn history...
"Well, I promise you one thing, we will never forget where we came from. *But you will; you always do...*"

That's quite a *bold claim.*
Any way to *back it up?*

Do you know how medieval societies got lead? They had to mine it from Roman ruins because the technology--*the knowledge*--of how to do it was lost during the Dark Ages.

"This wasn't an aberration. You humans--*through war, short-sightedness or pure ignorance*--tend to destroy yourselves every few thousand years."

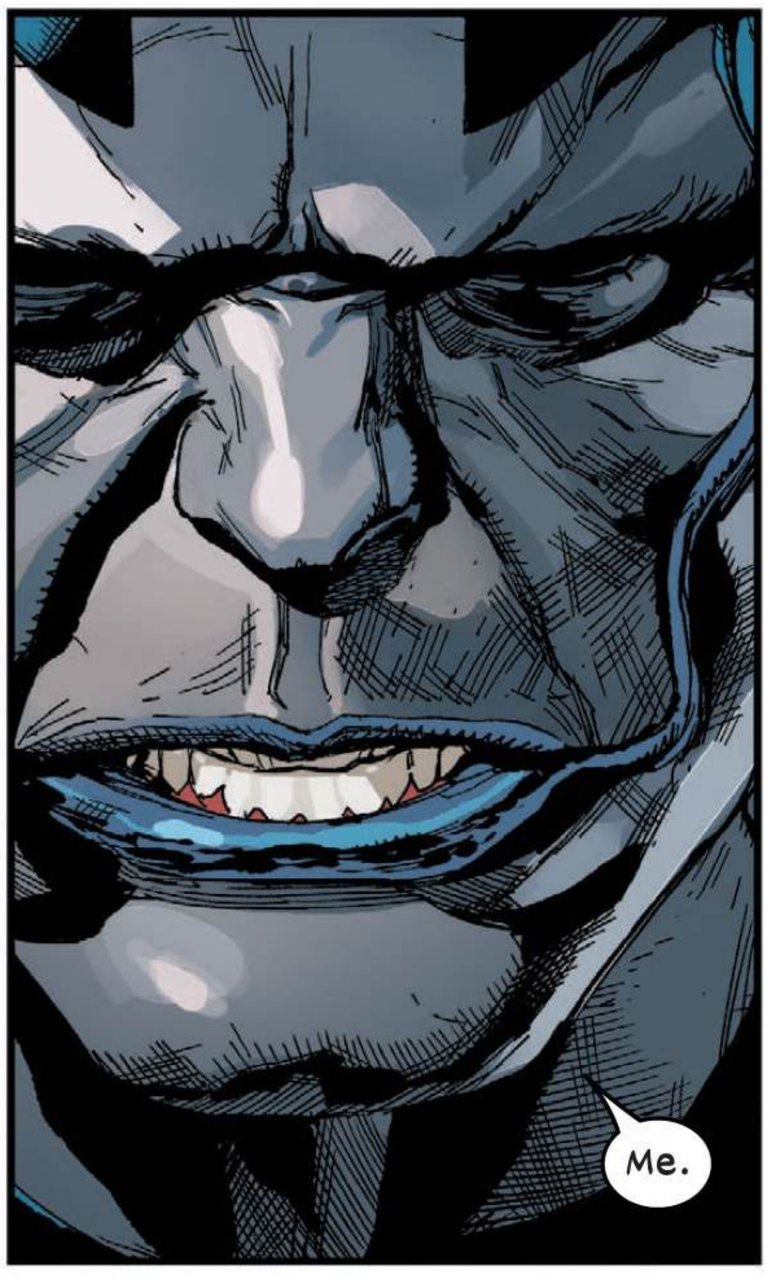

Look at the end of the Bronze Age. A dark age before the Dark Ages. You don't even know what caused the end of it, but there it is...
Yet another hole in the collective memory of man.

Who cares what caused the end of the Bronze Age?

I was alive then...

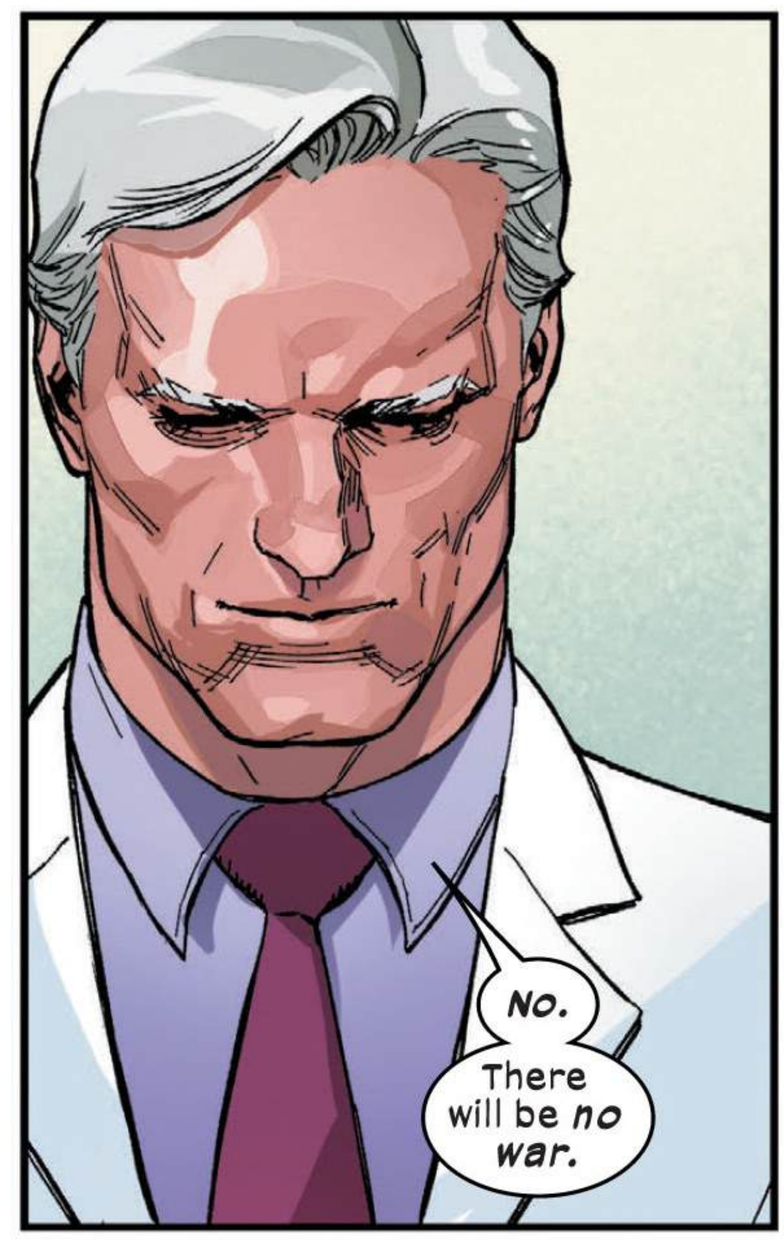
...and you *should* care.

*Is that so?* Then tell us...what *caused* the *collapse?*


Me.

Well... I can assure you, I haven't forgotten my history.
I know where this kind of posturing leads-- to the same place it always does.
To war.

Yet another conflict between mutant and man, except this time it has the potential to dwarf all that has preceded it.


No.
There will be no war.

Is that so?

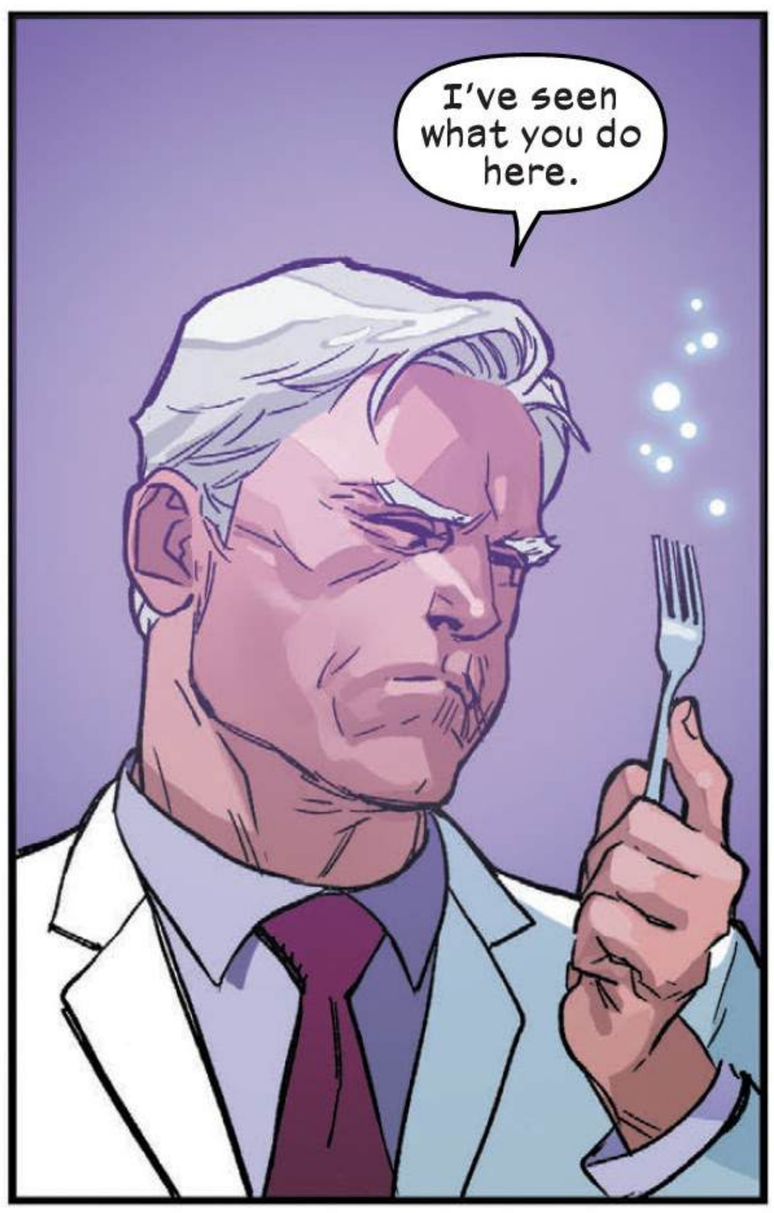
It is.

Surely you can see that our methods are changing--that they have changed.

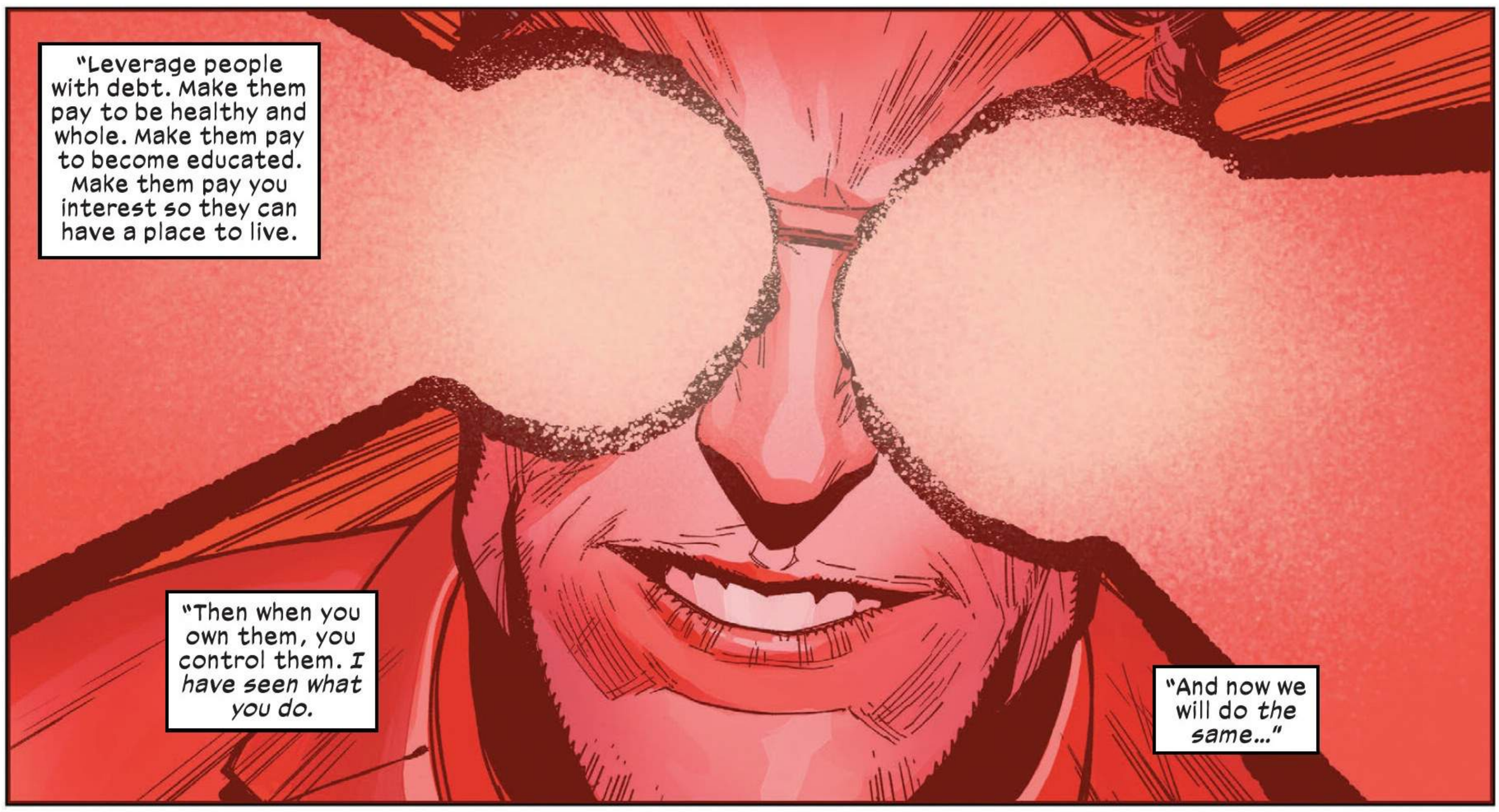
Take me, for example. In the past I would have seized your country's weapons of war and turned them on you...
I would have tried to show you how strong I was.
How strong I am.

"But we have learned. You've shown us the way with your quiet weapons of finance and your silent wars of influence."

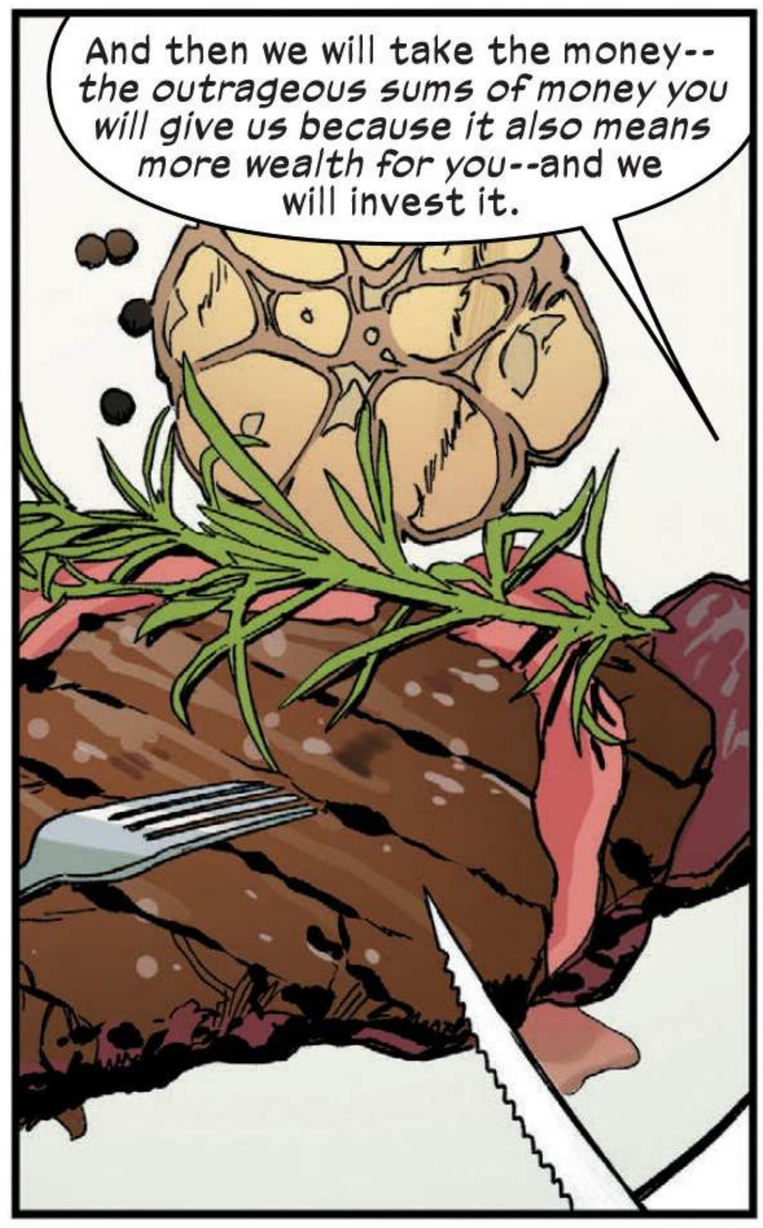
A little help, please.

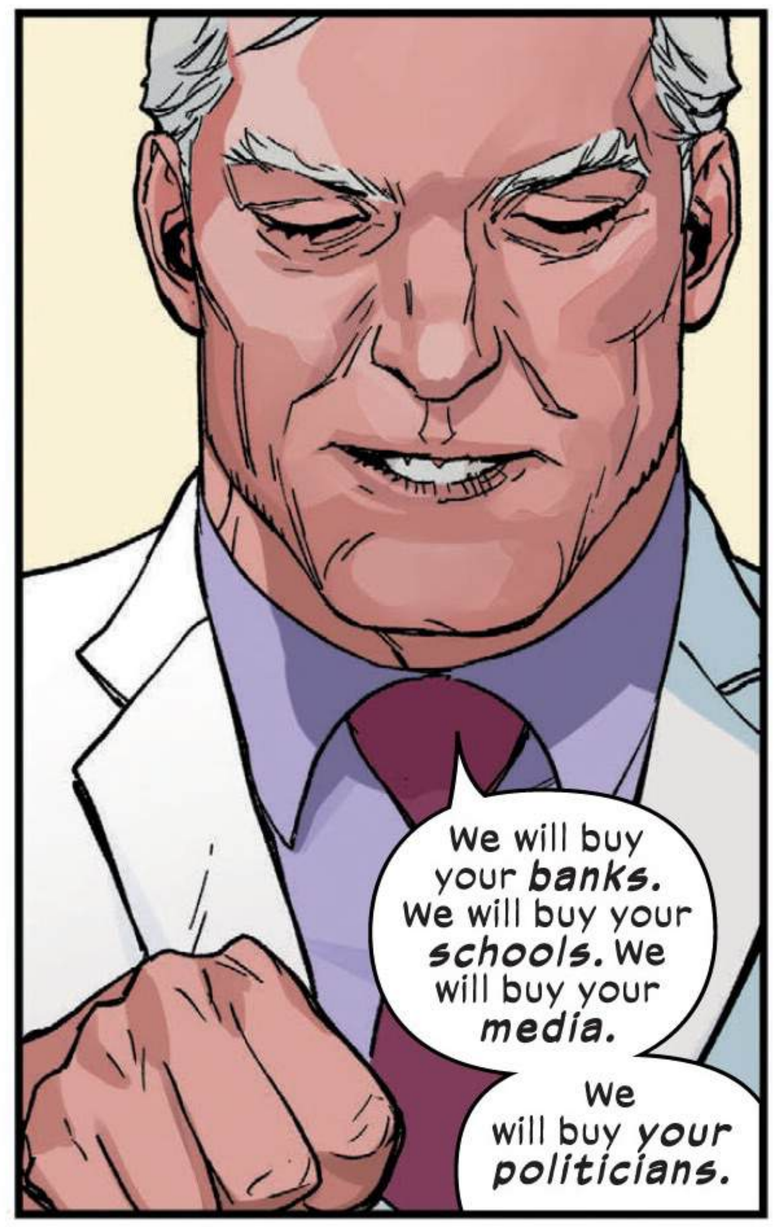

I've seen what you do here.

Thanks.
PHHSSTT


"Leverage people with debt. Make them pay to be healthy and whole. Make them pay to become educated. Make them pay you interest so they can have a place to live.
"Then when you own them, you control them. *I have seen what you do.*
"And now we will do *the same...*"

...but better.
Better versions of a better life. Better drugs for a longer, healthier existence.


And then we will take the money--*the outrageous sums of money you will give us because it also means more wealth for you*--and we will invest it.


We will buy your *banks.* We will buy your *schools.* We will buy your *media.*
We will buy *your politicians.*

And then, when we have bought all the rest, we will buy *you*--because you have taught us that everything has a price.
And we are *happy to pay.*

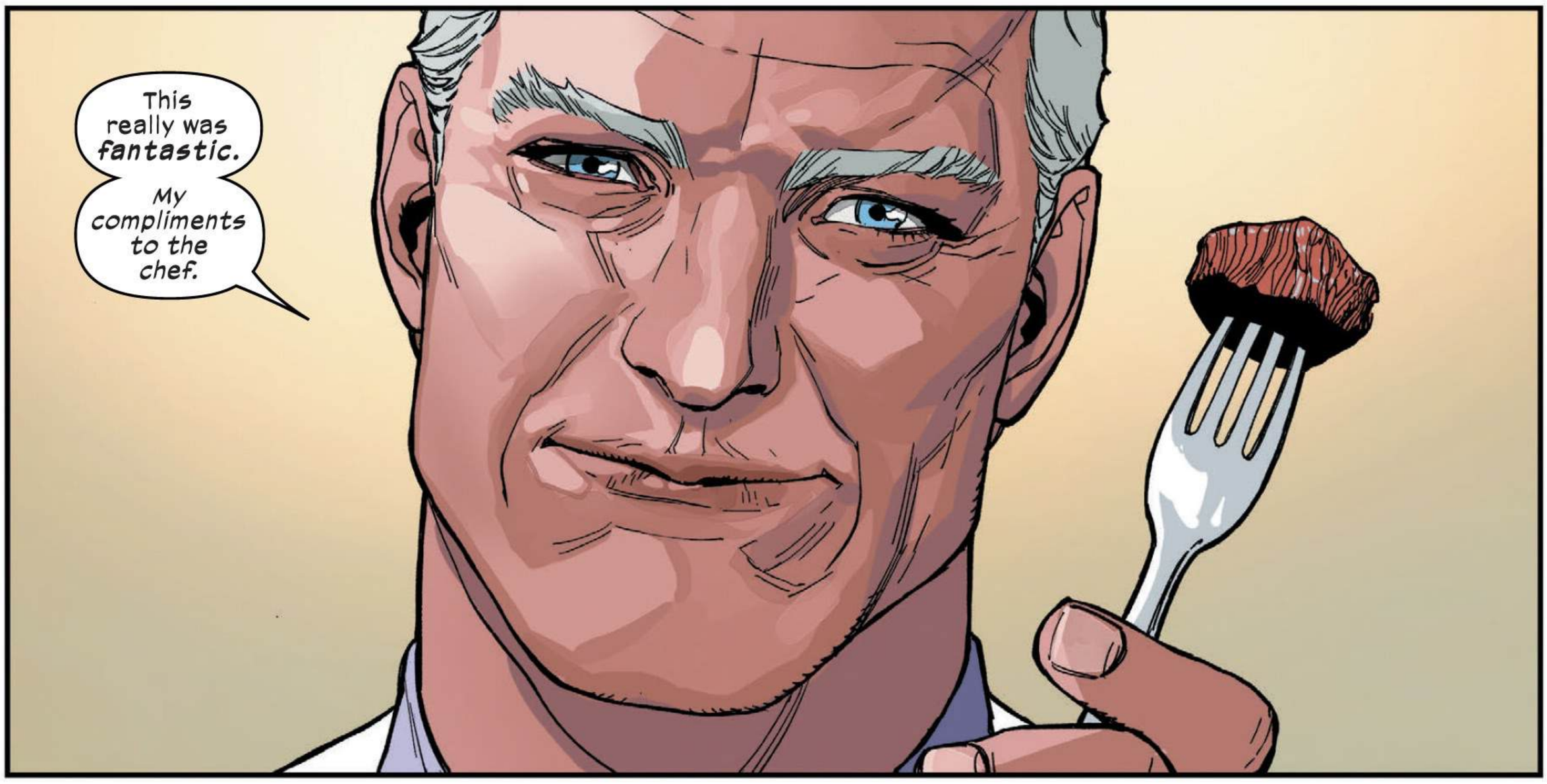
Then, when we have this influence--*we will use it.* We will make sure that the wrong sort of people--*and you know who*--no longer have any economic power.

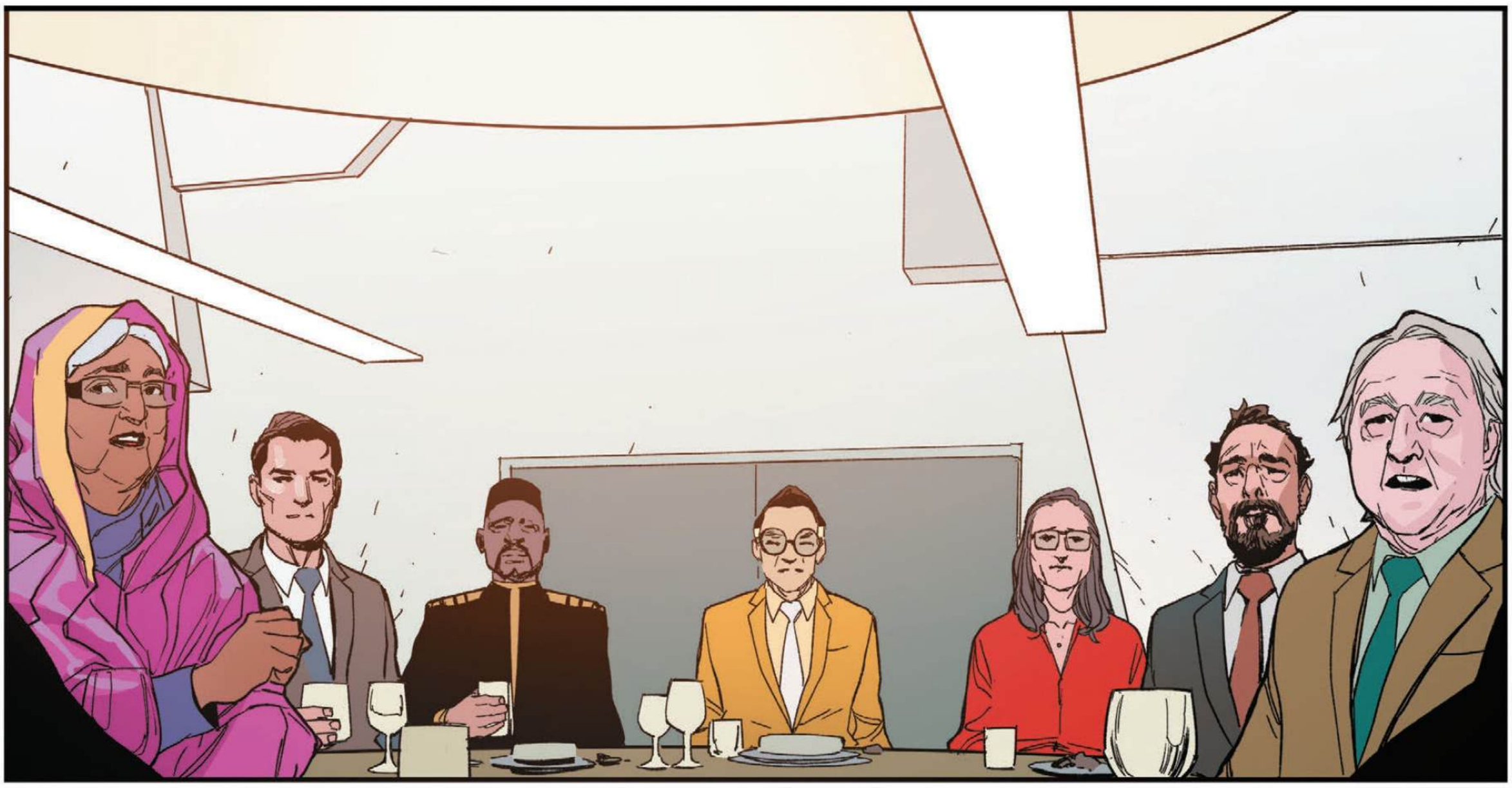
We will not allow them inside our institutions, because it's important they do not have anywhere to peddle their dangerous, outdated ideas.

And that is how it will end. Like a fire with no oxygen.

Yes, of course, there will still be people who fear and hate us...they just simply won't be able to do anything about it any longer.

*So as I said...*
There will be *no war.*
Oh, and by the way...

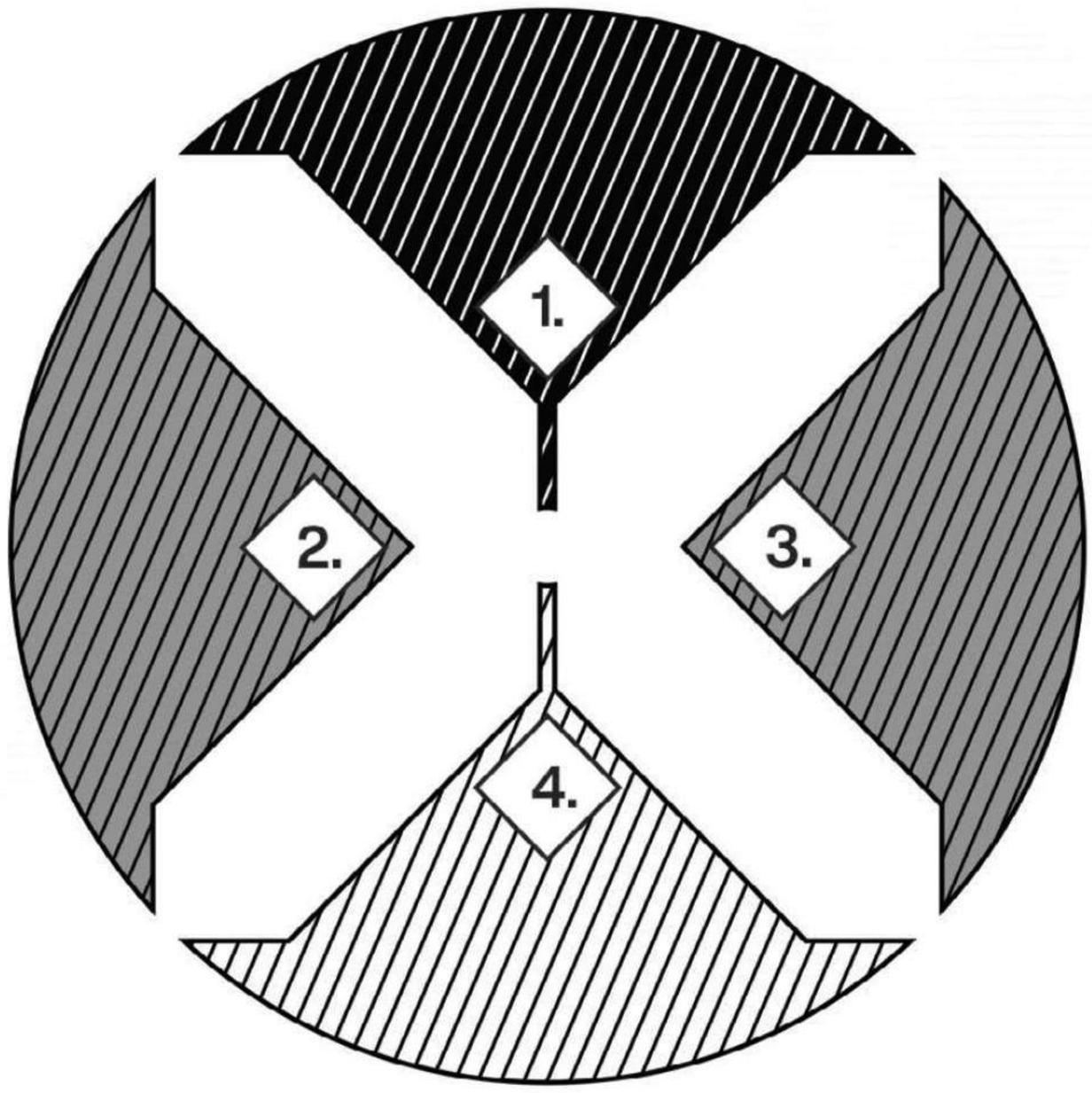

This really was *fantastic.*
*My compliments to the chef.*



All clear on the second floor, Professor.
*Good.* We're almost done here. You should head our way.
All right. Let's wrap things up, Gorgon.
*Time to go.*
I'll be right there.

# KRAKOAN CAPTAINS






## CAPTAIN HIERARCHY

[1]

CYCLOPS.....
CAPTAIN COMMANDER.....
X-MEN.....

[2]

MAGIK.....
CAPTAIN.....
SEXTANT.....

[3]

BISHOP.....
CAPTAIN.....
HELLFIRE TRADING.....

[4]

GORGON.....
CAPTAIN.....
COUNCIL GUARD.....

**GORGON**
While the other three captains have broader, more extensive jurisdictions, Gorgon has a smaller, more specific one.* As one of the most experienced, and most lethal, mutants on Earth, he was chosen by the Captain Commander [after consultation with Wolverine] to act as the personal protector for members of the Quiet Council [especially when they leave Krakoa].

*After the events surrounding the assassination of Charles Xavier, if an Autumn council member plans to enter a hostile environment, the expectation is that Gorgon will accompany them.

This was your greatest mistake...

Thinking you were a warrior.
Yes, you studied, you trained, you tested yourself against your fellow man...

But now you know what you really are...
...and what a true warrior looks like.

In the past, my contempt for you would have manifested itself in an uncomplicated manner:

I simply would have taken *your head.*

But these are *new days*--and *I am led by brilliant mutants who understand war better than I ever could.*

I have seen the error of my ways. Now I *understand.*
I am *enlightened.*

I know now it's better that you live.
*Like this.* With the shame of what you are.

Embrace this mercy, human.
And never test my kind again.

I can't help but notice...

...you keep touching your ear.
Everything *all right?*

I'm not sure, to be honest.
*Hard to tell.*

Let me clear things up for you.
They're *not coming.*

What's he talking about?

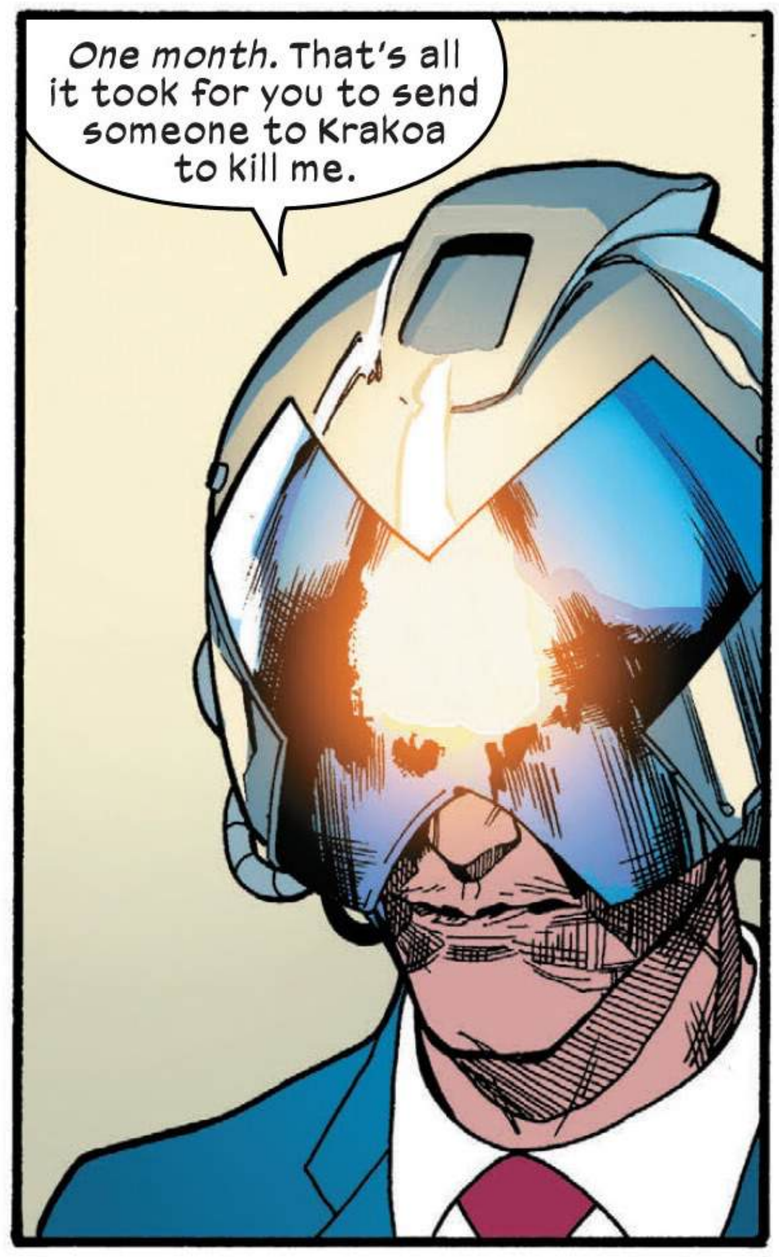
He had two weapons teams spirited away on the floors above and below us in case things didn't go the way he wanted.
And they *didn't.* *In either case.*

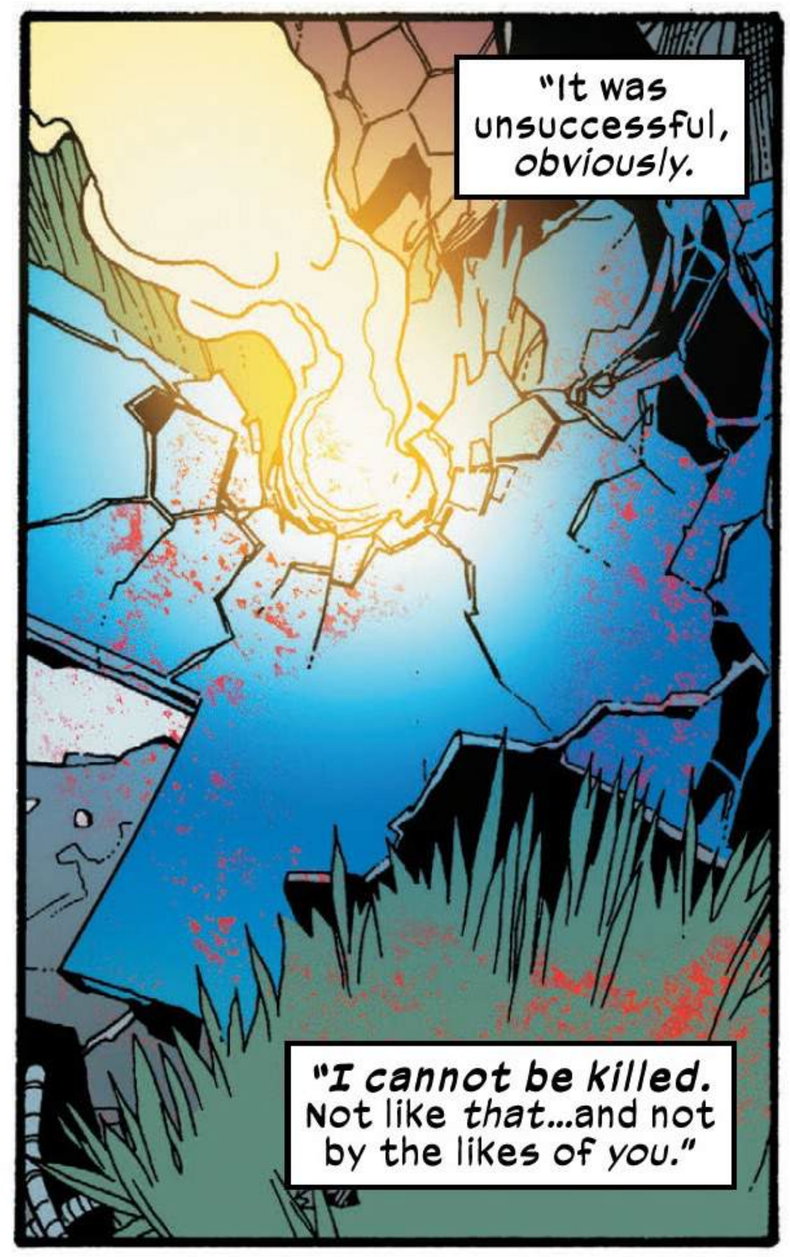
At some point it would behoove you to recognize that this situation is not one that can be handled unilaterally.

It's not lost on me that I'm the one arguing that the money isn't worth it.
But believe me--it's not worth it.

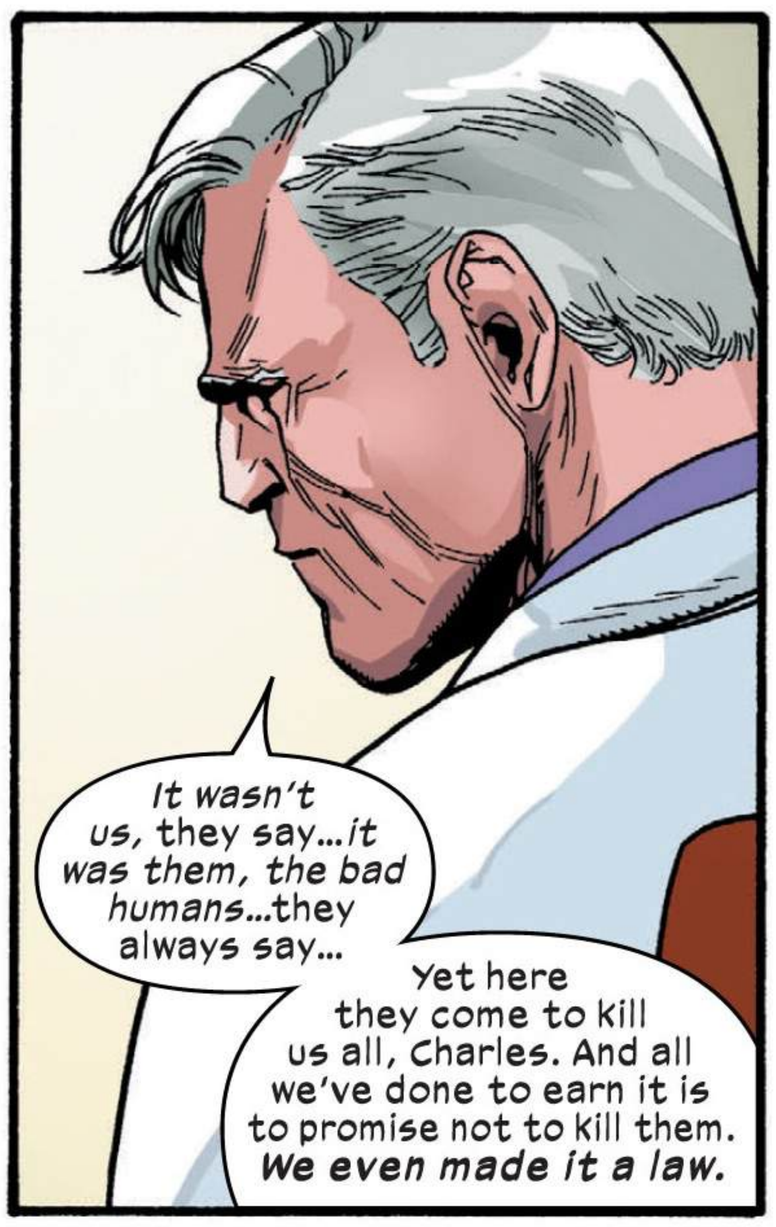
Do you think they are lying to you?
You heard them. They're not hiding what they want or what they are.

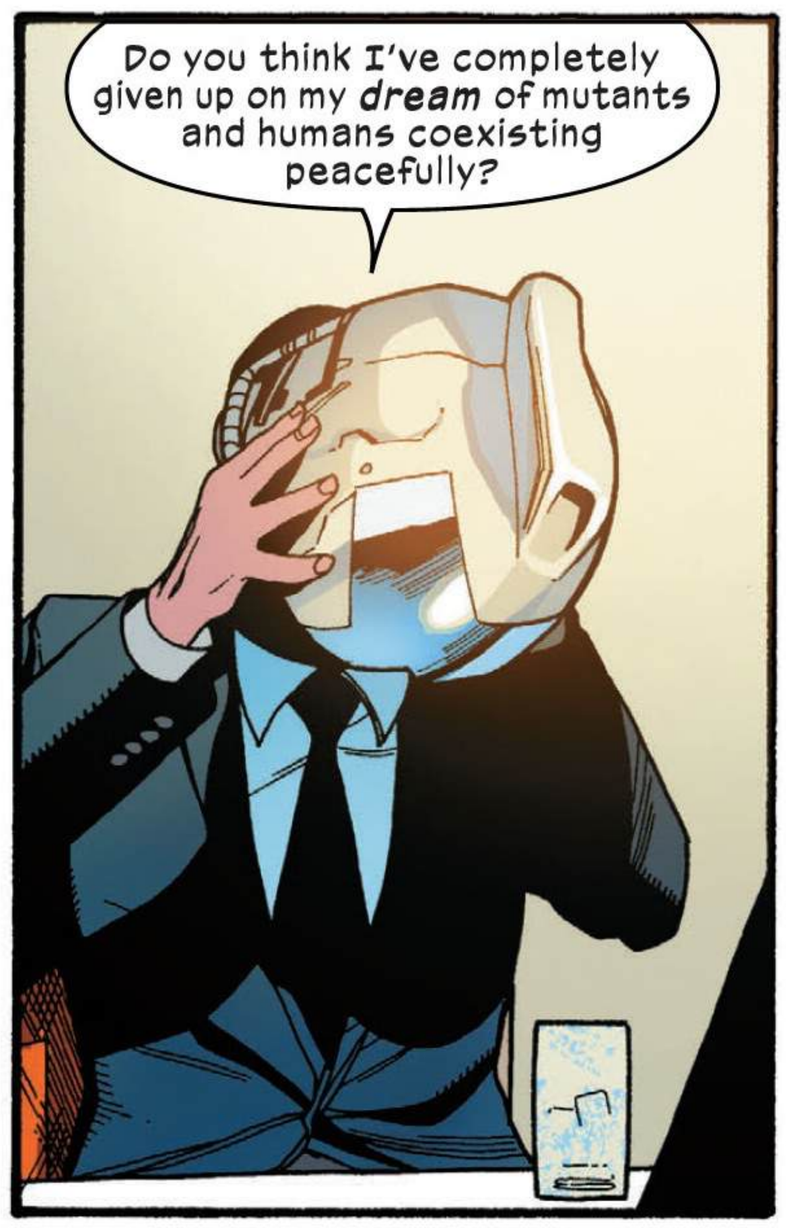
We cannot trust them. How long do you think until someone blinks and this peaceful detente disappears?
A month.
What?


One month. That's all it took for you to send someone to Krakoa to kill me.


"It was unsuccessful, obviously.
"I cannot be killed. Not like that...and not by the likes of you."

We didn't send anyone to kill you.


It wasn't us, they say...it was them, the bad humans...they always say...
Yet here they come to kill us all, Charles. And all we've done to earn it is to promise not to kill them. We even made it a law.


Do you think I've completely given up on my dream of mutants and humans coexisting peacefully?

Do you think I don't love you?
Because I do. I do... and I want you to always remember that.

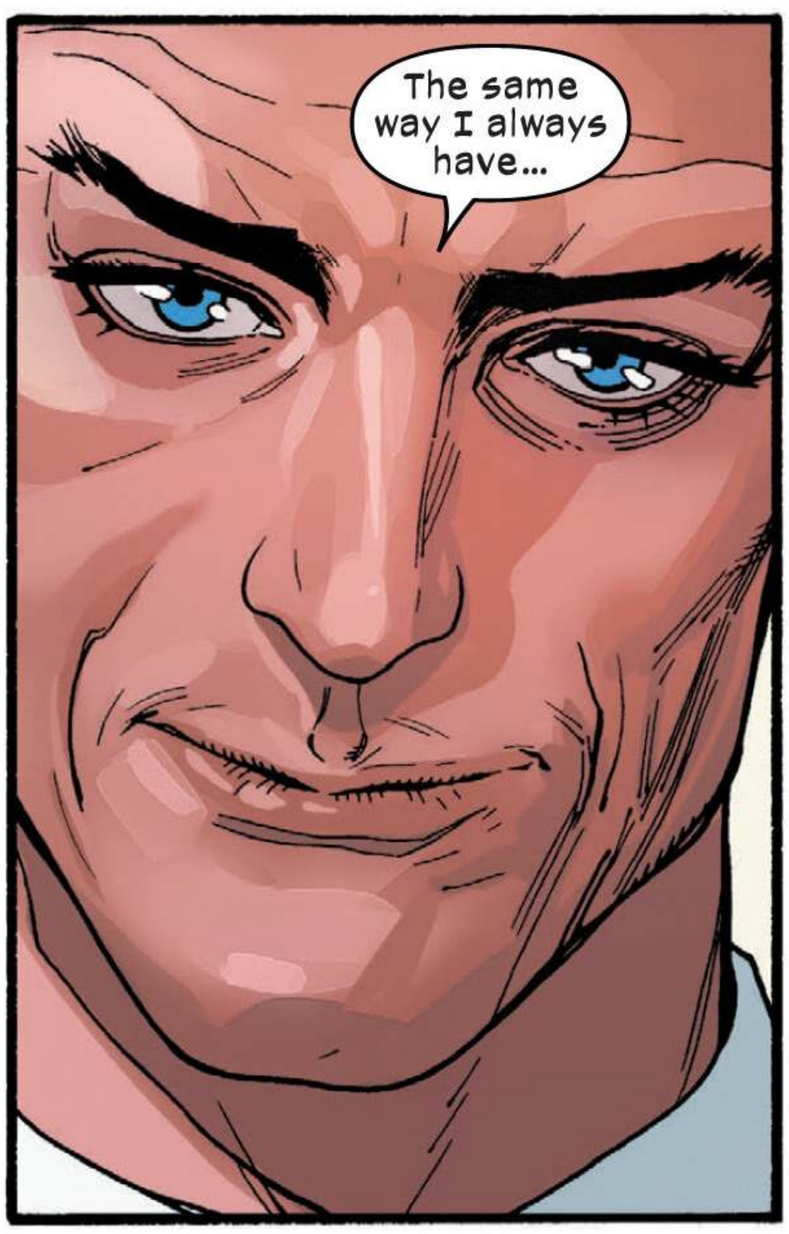
Someone once told me that I've spent my whole life dreaming the wrong dream...
And I'll admit--the last month has been something of an education--but there's a small part of me that will never stop believing in that dream.

There's a part of me that will never stop believing in you.

But it only took one month before you tried to kill me.
And you were going to try again today, *weren't you?*

...
You've basically admitted to everyone here today that you see the world as yours.
What did you think we would do?

Learn the lesson: *Evolve. Adapt.*
*Become something more.*


The same way I always have...

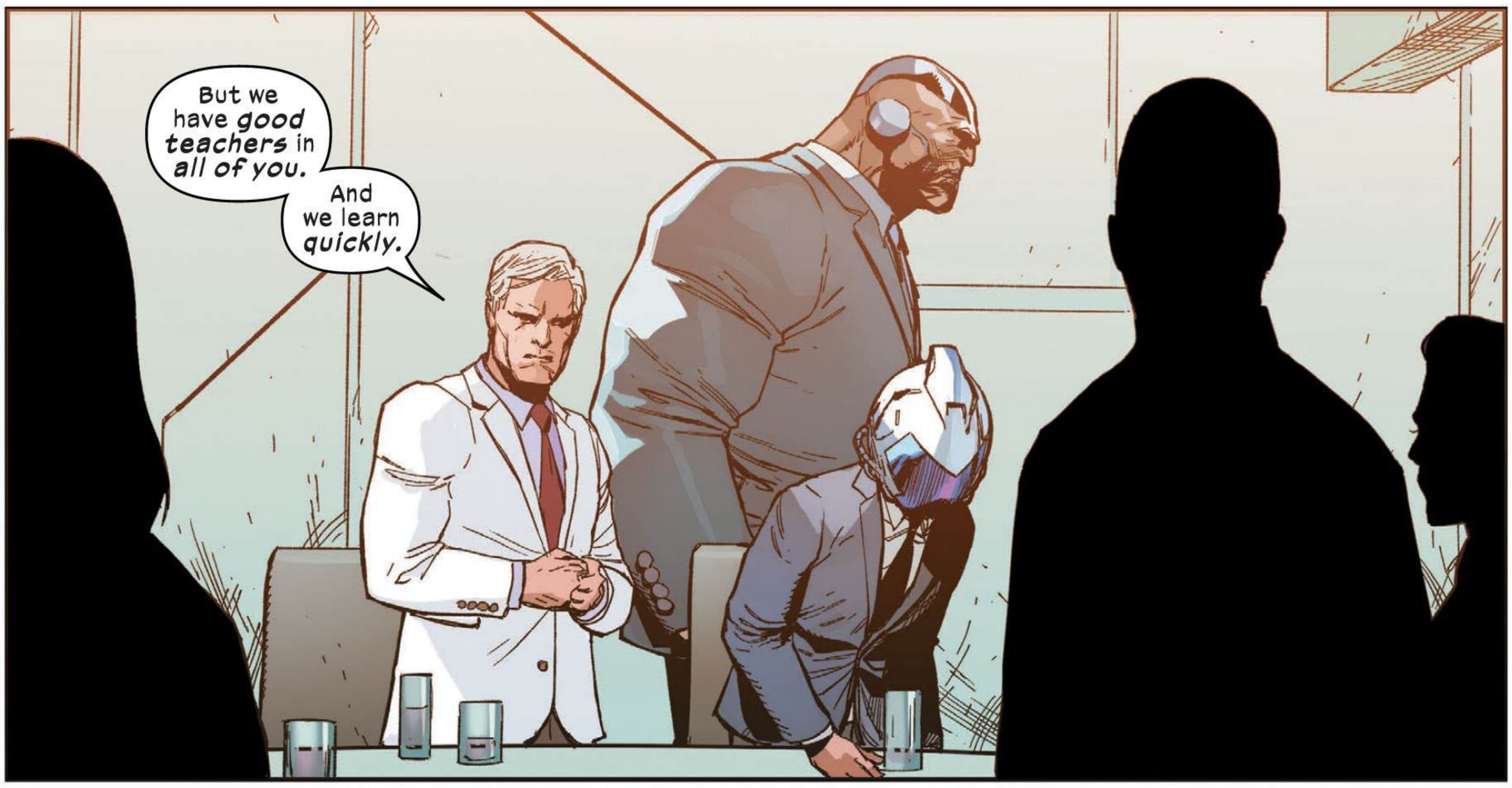
If you want to be angry-- *if you want to lash out--* because we are claiming what is rightfully ours, then *so be it...*

Just know it's the last time it ends like this.

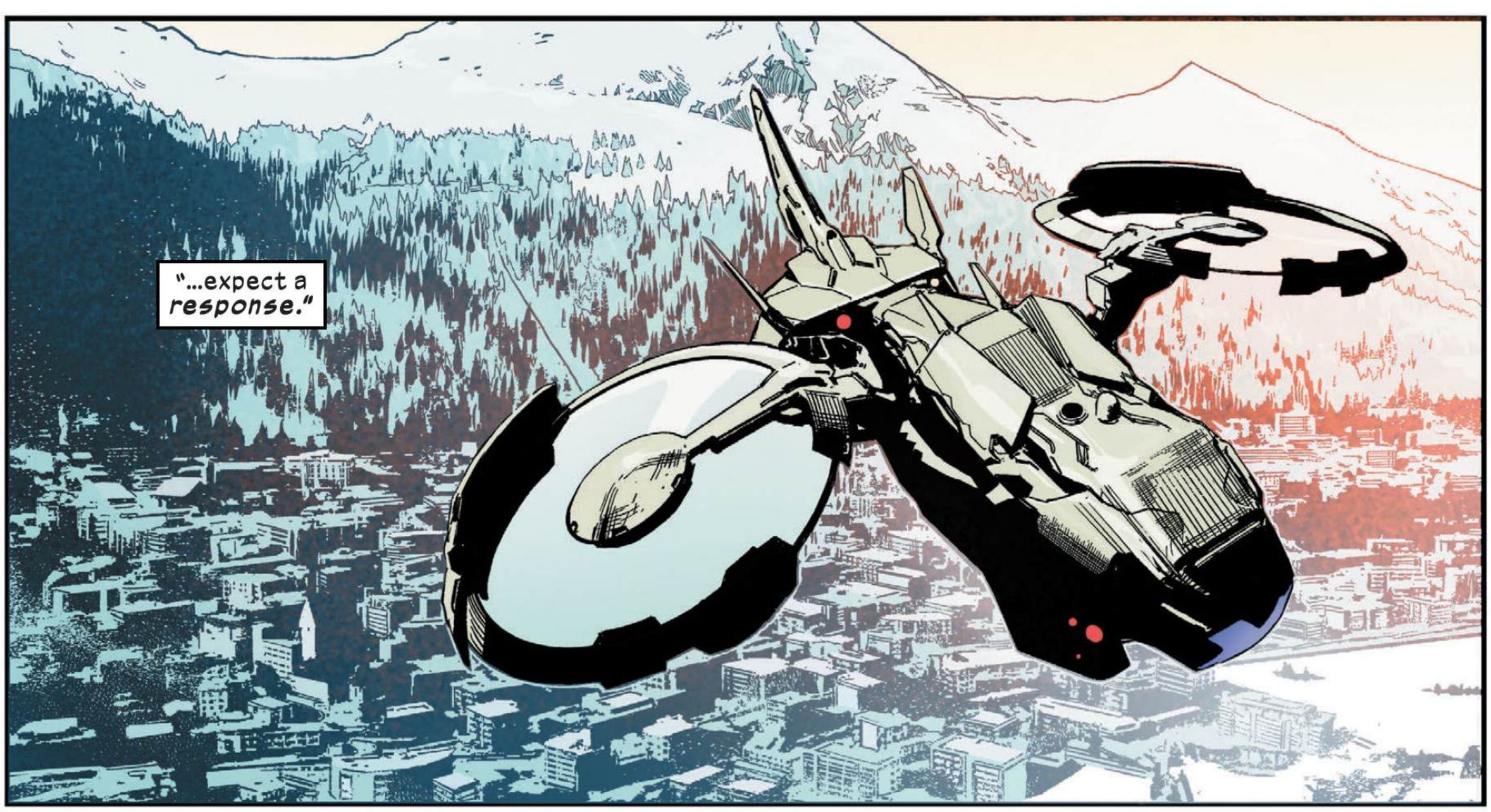
*What is that supposed to mean?*

I don't think there should be any confusion. It seemed rather clear to me.

Mutants have never been in this position before--*being part of a brotherhood of nations*--so admittedly, we have a bit of a learning curve to overcome...

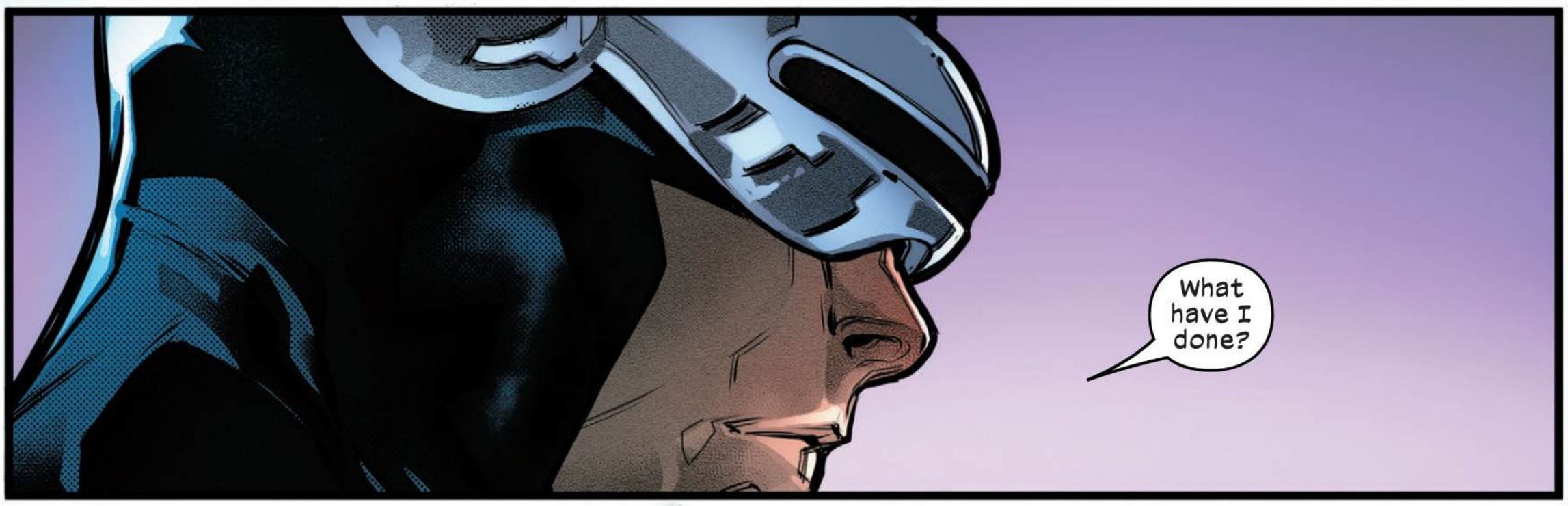

But we have *good teachers* in *all of you.*
And we learn *quickly.*

Try us again, *if you will.*
But if you do...


"...expect a *response.*"

# Into the Vault

5


What have I done?

What the hell was I thinking?

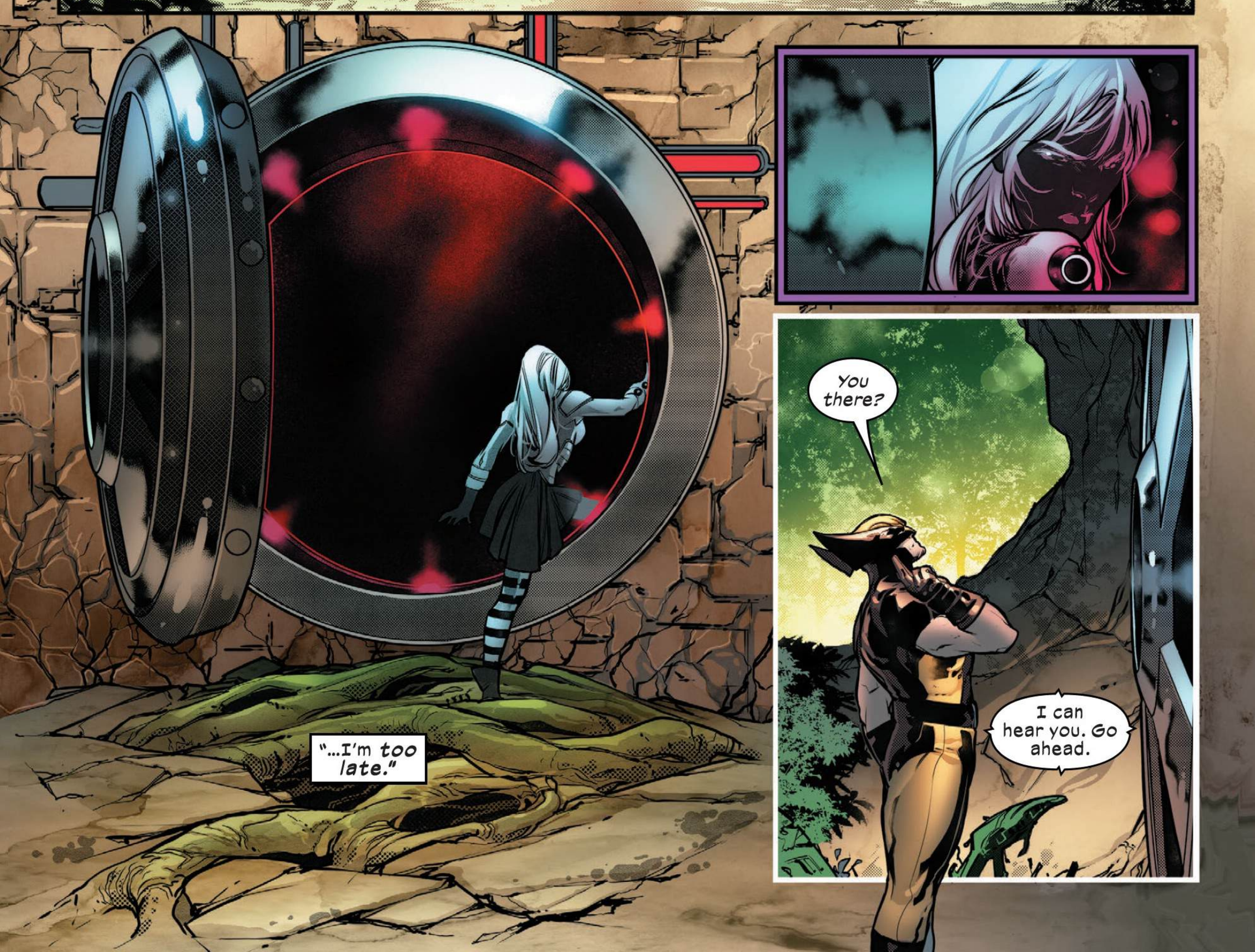
Ecuador.
‹What's this?›*
‹Easy, girl.›
‹She looks half dead. Get her something to drink--get her some water.›
‹NO. Just... just...›
‹Keep him from following me.›
*Translated from Spanish.

I know *that look.* If I tell you I've tried to talk a thousand men outta the mistake you're gettin' ready to make...*I know I'm low.*
Is there any way I can convince you gentlemen to *step aside* and just let me catch the *very bad girl?*
*Didn't think so.*

NOW...
...Where did you go?

Later.
SNIFF SNIFF

SNIKT
Damn it...


"...I'm too late."
You there?
I can hear you. Go ahead.

Sorry, Slim. Serafina slipped inside *the Vault* before I could get to her. You want me to cut my way--
***No.*** That won't help with the temporal problem. We need you back here...
We'll have to think of *another way* in.

[////.....0]
[////.....0]

____//
[BREACH DETECTED]
//////

//////
ACCESS BY [SECONDARY THRESHOLD] OF THE CITY.
SCANNING FOR CONTAGION.....SCAN COMPLETE:..[SUBJECT CLEAN]
//////
CHILD IDENTIFIED:.....CLASS: SERAFINA....[LEVEL: TWO]

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[_____].....[___]
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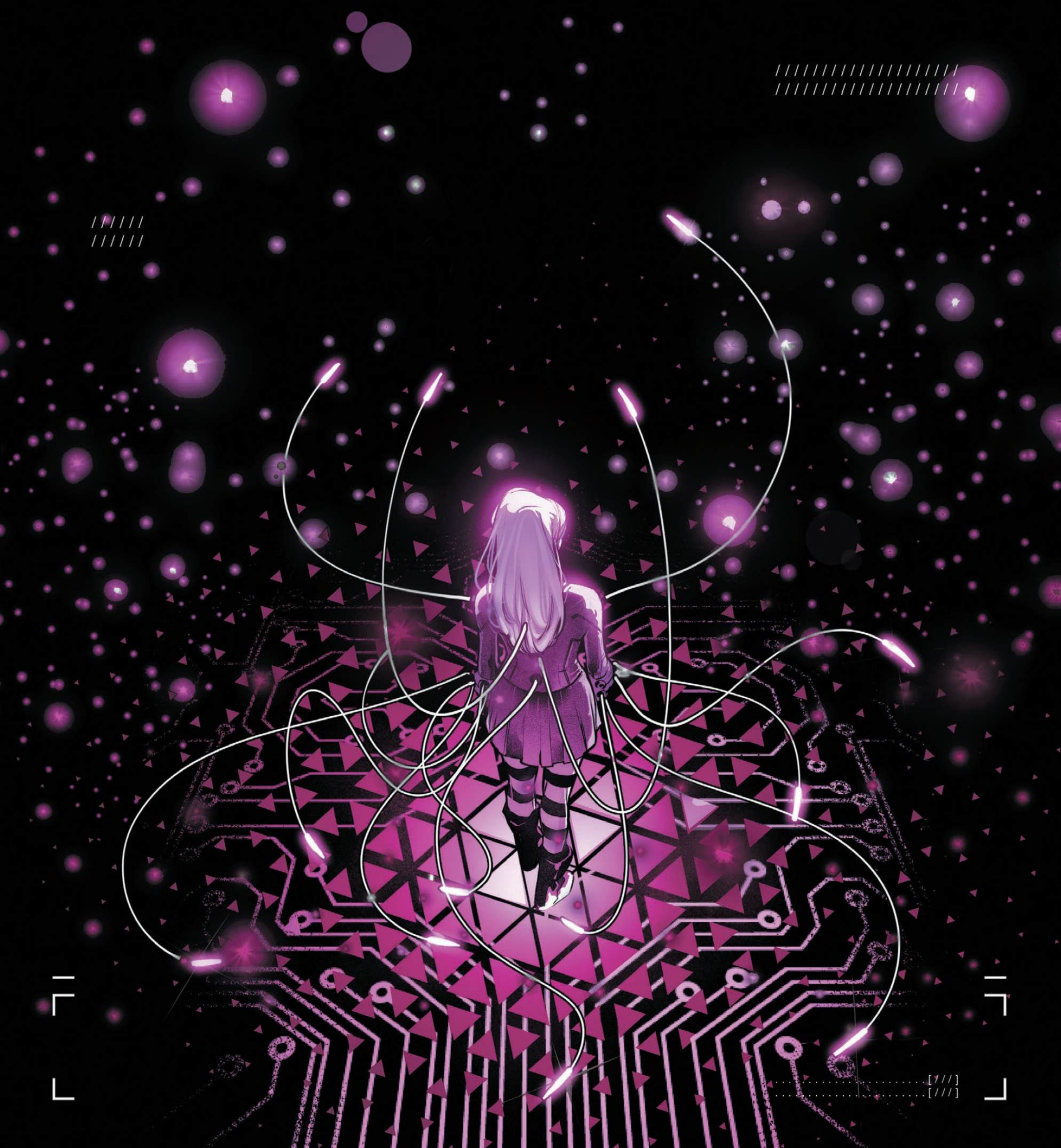

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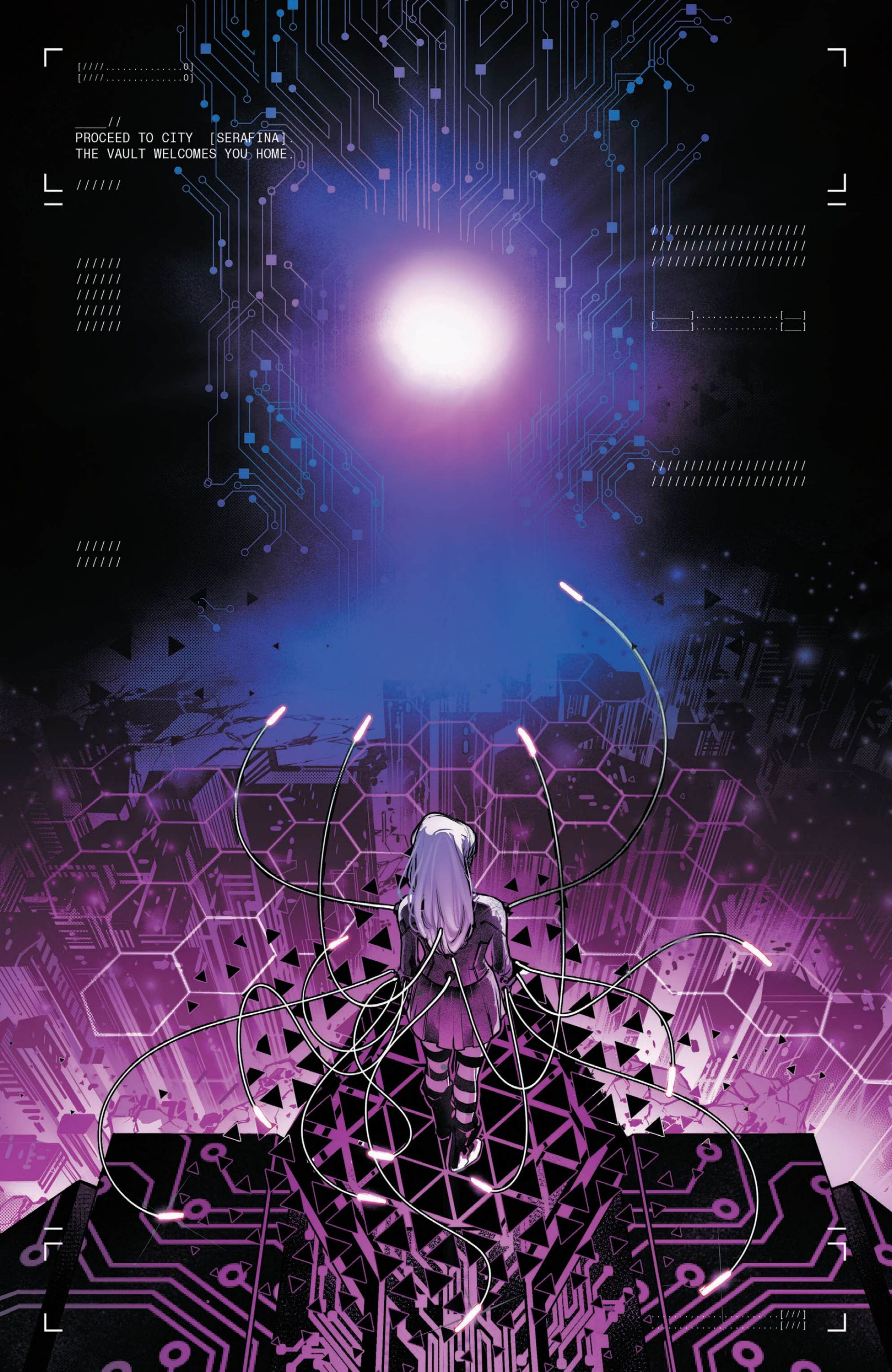

PROCEED TO CITY [SERAFINA].
THE VAULT WELCOMES YOU HOME.

Here's the thing you have to remember:

***Time*** flows *differently* inside ***the Vault.***

The idea behind it is essentially the same as ***the World***--that out here in the real world, time moves at its normal pace, but in there, it's accelerated.

The difference between the two is that ***the World*** is ***evolutionarily based...the Vault,*** *however...*

...it's something else entirely. ***Human adaptation along technological lines,*** not *evolutionary.*

Sounds like a ***problem*** in search of a ***solution.***

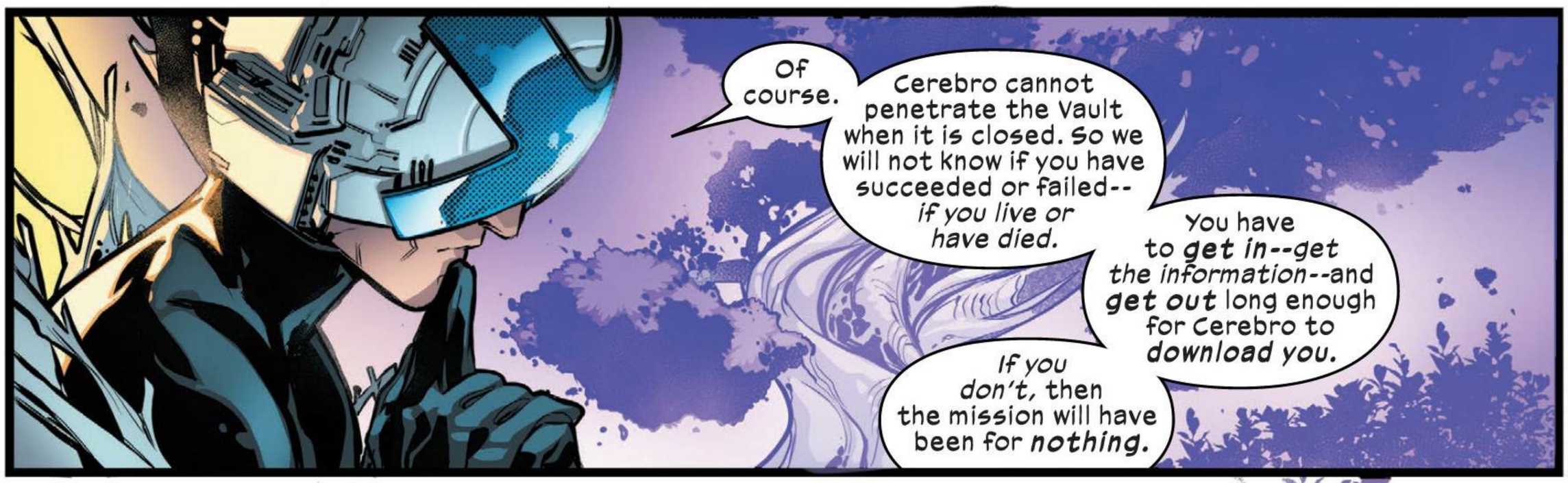
Listen to me--for I cannot stress this enough--the Children of the Vault represent the single greatest existential threat to mutantdom...
...and we know nothing about them. Not really.
So we're sending a team... inside.
And we're asking the three of you to go.
Darwin. We believe your adaptive powers make you uniquely prepared to evaluate both the atemporal environment and the Children themselves.
Thank you.

Synch. Your ability to copy another mutant's power will act as a redundancy...
Feels like an insult.
It's also a second set of observational eyes for Darwin and the survival mechanisms of...

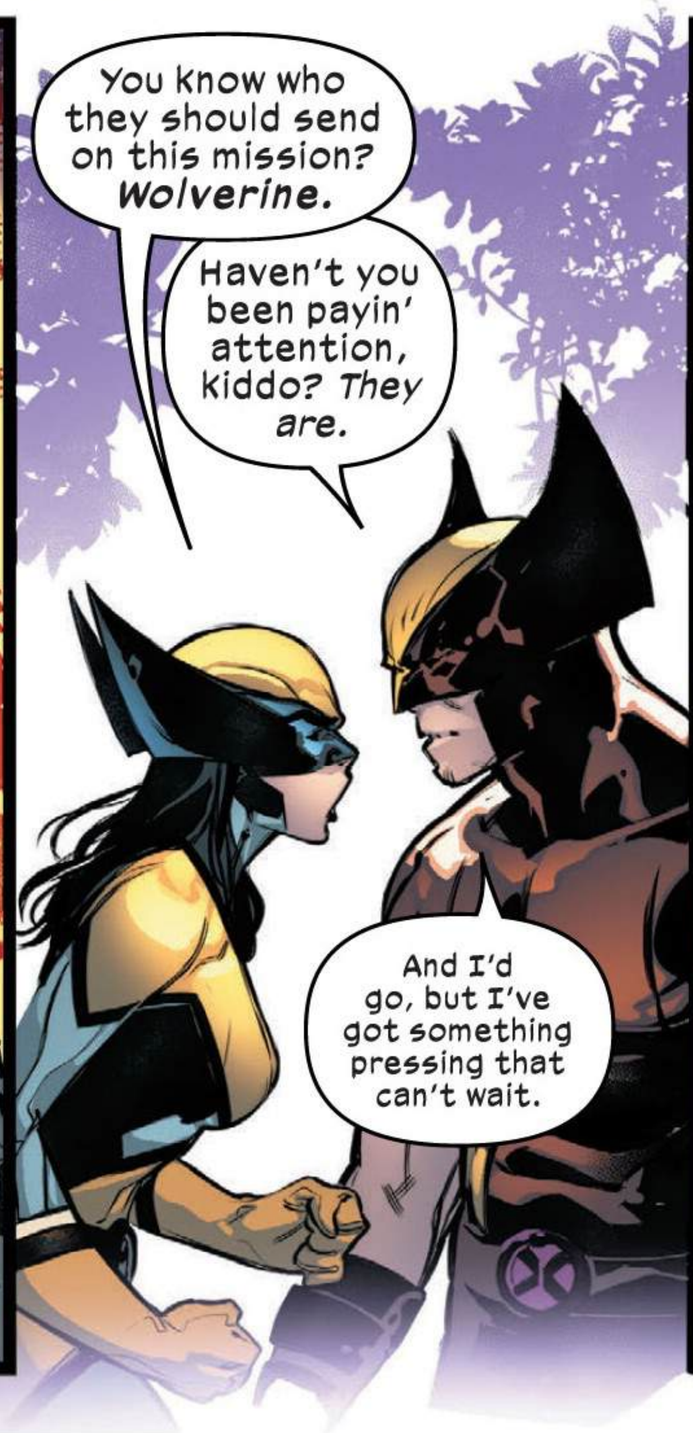
...X-23, who, like Wolverine--
Actually, I'm Wolverine.

You tell 'em, kiddo.

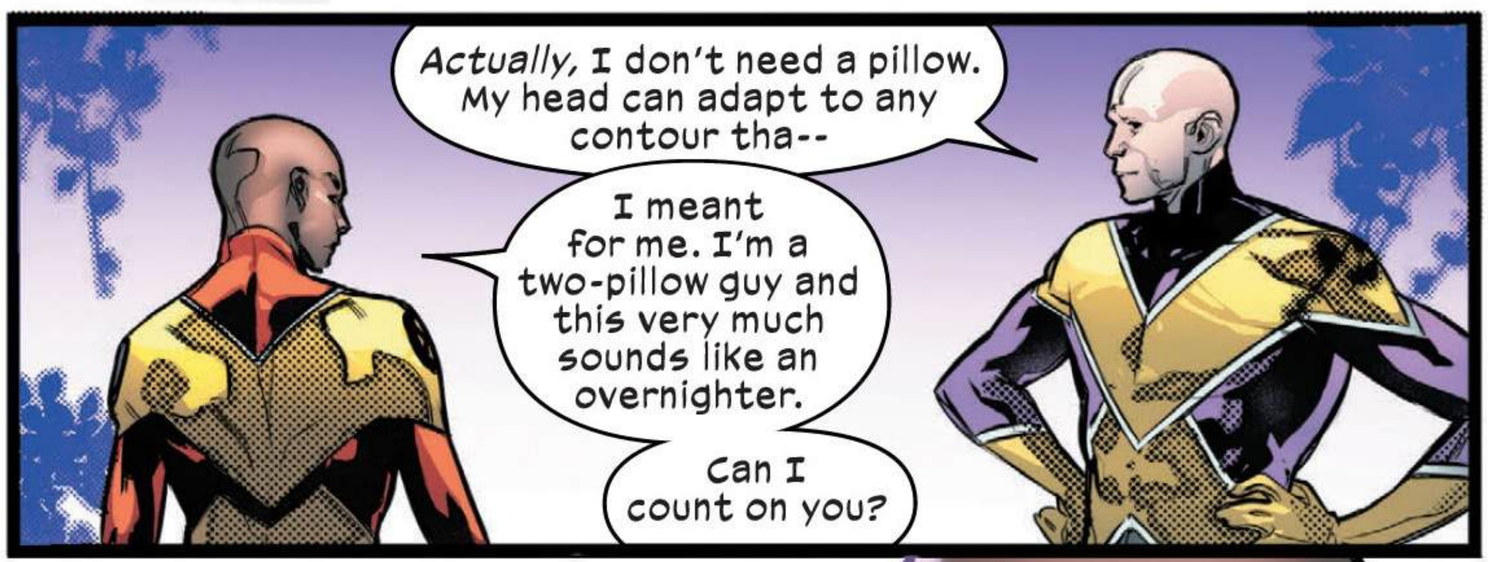
Either way...
...you have the healing ability to withstand the initial temporal shear and live long enough to report back... so we can understand what we're really up against.
You have to tell them the rest.
There are risks.


Of course.
Cerebro cannot penetrate the Vault when it is closed. So we will not know if you have succeeded or failed-- *if you live or have died.*
You have to ***get in***--*get the information*--and ***get out*** long enough for Cerebro to ***download you.***
*If you don't,* then the mission will have been for ***nothing.***

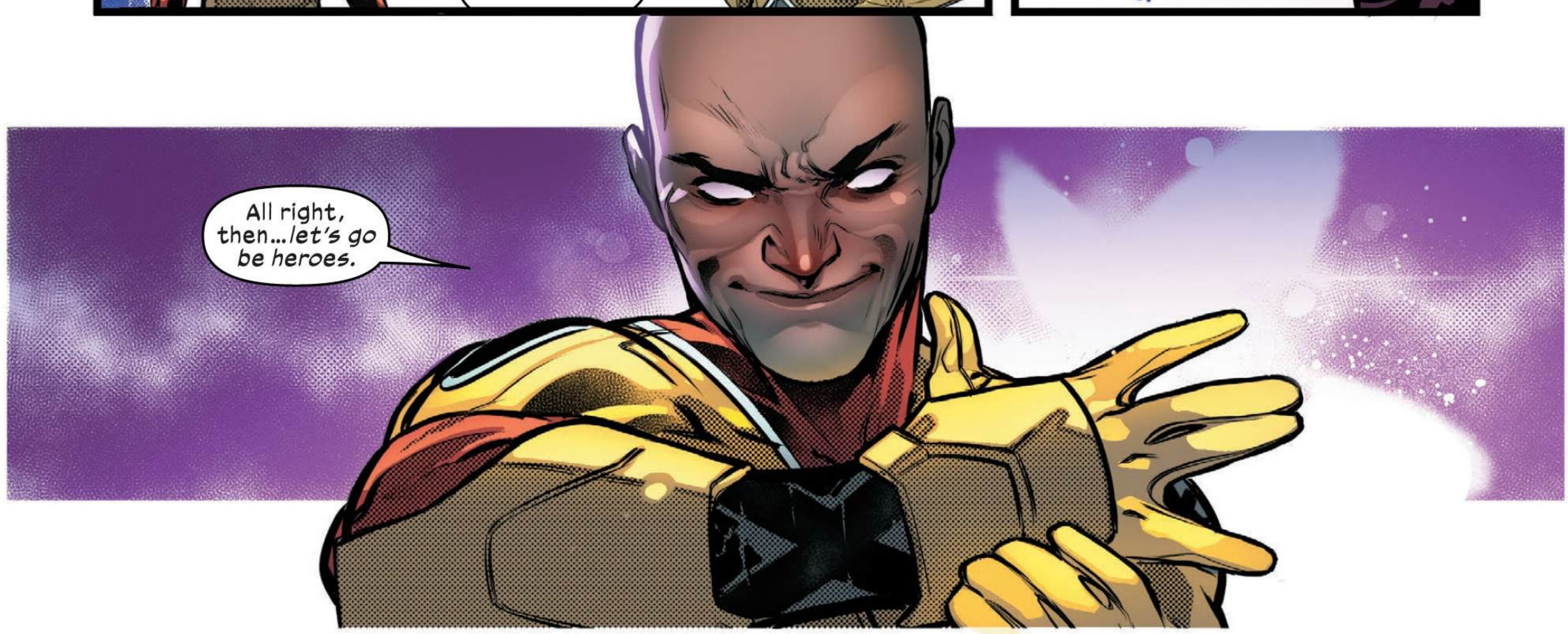
Exactly how long are we going to be gone?
*Yeah.* About that...
We believe there are ways to sneak you in. But once you are in, we can't get proof of life or death-- *we can't resurrect you*--until the Vault reopens.
And the last time it opened, ***several thousand years*** had passed inside.


You know who they should send on this mission? ***Wolverine.***
Haven't you been payin' attention, kiddo? *They are.*
And I'd go, but I've got something pressing that can't wait.

A couple thousand years, *huh?* You need to pack a pillow, Darwin.


*Actually,* I don't need a pillow. My head can adapt to any contour tha--
I meant for me. I'm a two-pillow guy and this very much sounds like an overnighter.
Can I count on you?

*Yes.* You can count on me.


All right, then...*let's go be heroes.*

# MEDICAL REPORT



**PATIENT FILE: #14**
RE: Post-resurrection analysis of Synch [Everett Thomas]

—

**PHYSIOLOGY**

One week after rebirth, the patient appears to be in good health and excellent physical condition. Testing also indicates there doesn't appear to be a detrimental upper limit to what we are calling "peak physical form." A review of Synch's training sessions from his time at the Massachusetts Academy shows that he is now operating at a four percent increase in natural physical ability. The Five, it seems, are correcting [possibly unconsciously] the minor imperfections of each mutant they resurrect.

**[NOTE: Synch was one of the earliest resurrected mutants because it was believed that his powers could enable him to act as a substitute for any of the Five who might need one. And while this proved to be the case, it was unknown at the time that resurrection isn't taxing for the Five but restorative.]**

—

**PSYCHOLOGY**

Unfortunately, while the patient appears to be physically fine, the same cannot be said for his psychological condition. I would stop short of saying Everett is in denial, but he is clearly putting on a brave face regarding his current situation.

There is no escaping the fact that he looks around and sees a world that has changed in ways that he doesn't fully comprehend. And while this is burdensome enough, to see other mutants who were once fellow students of his having changed and in some ways passed him by has proven to be incredibly difficult for him.

So much so that I cannot currently recommend the further resurrection of similar mutants in Everett's situation unless a less harmful solution presents itself.*

- Dr. Cecilia Reyes

***[NOTE: Because of this experience, the idea of clustering mutants together from similar backgrounds and time periods was tested by resurrecting the mutant Skin [Angelo Espinosa] ahead of [his scheduled] time to serve as a companion for Synch. The success of this served to adapt our early resurrection protocols to better serve mutant society.]**

[////.....0]
[////.....0]

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FIELD DOWNLOAD:
CLASS: SERAFINA [LEVEL: TWO]

//////
REPORT FOR CHILD POD 5/600 [RECONNAISSANCE]

.....CHILD: SANGRE.....DECEASED [_]
.....CHILD: PERRO.....DECEASED [_]
.....CHILD: SERAFINA.....CAPTURED [/]
.....CHILD: AGUJA.....DECEASED [_]
.....CHILD: FUEGO.....DECEASED [_]

//////
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PRIMARY ANALYSIS:
Mission failure.

SECONDARY ANALYSIS:
Increased threat activity level of non-augmented, naturally occurring human population
[Non-posthuman resistance expected. Threat level: secondary.]

Increased threat activity level of *Homo superior*
[Mutant resistance expected. Threat level: primary.]

CONCLUSION:
Vault opening delayed. Child level: Three necessary for successful occupation/subjugation of external environment [World].

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[////.....0]
[////.....0]

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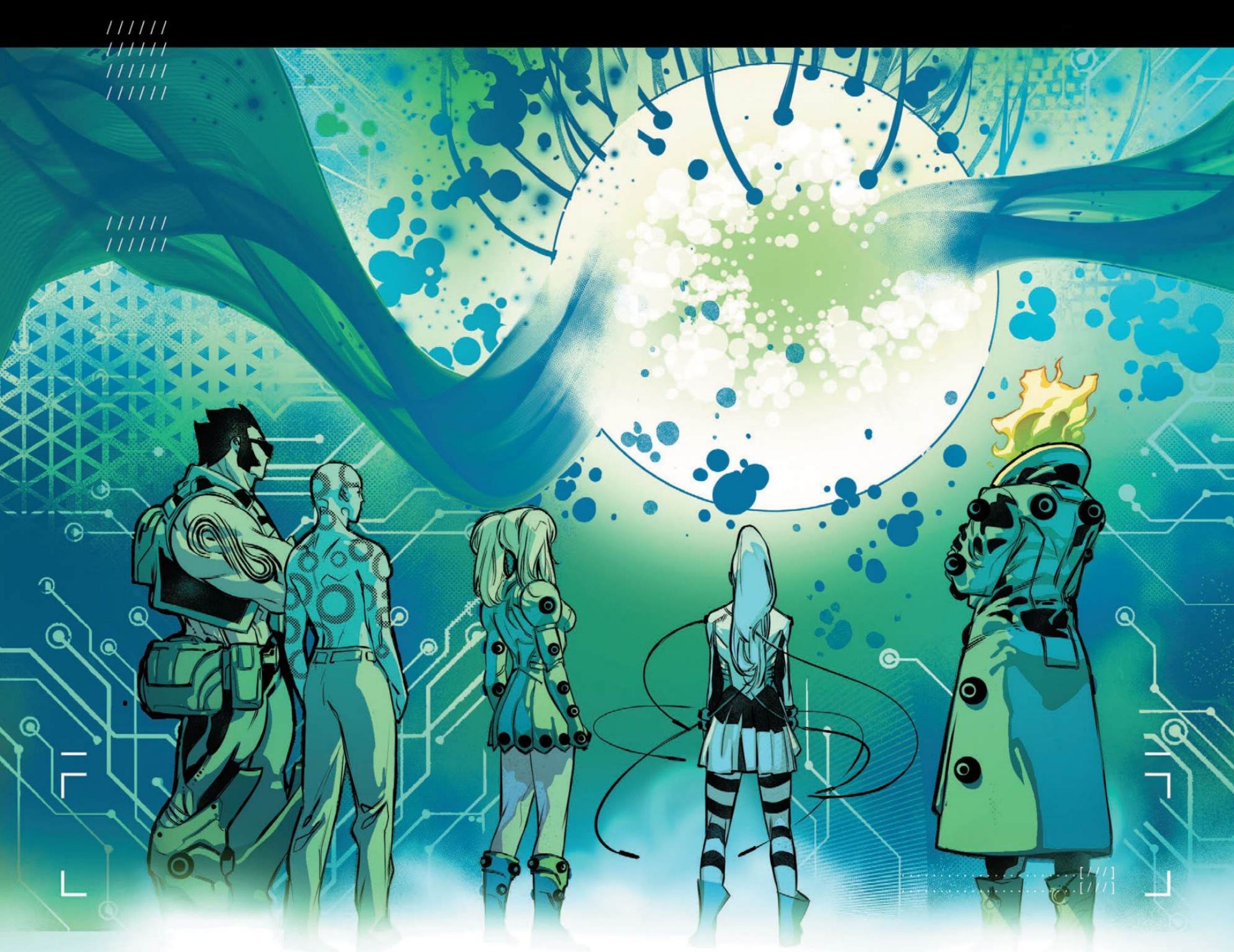
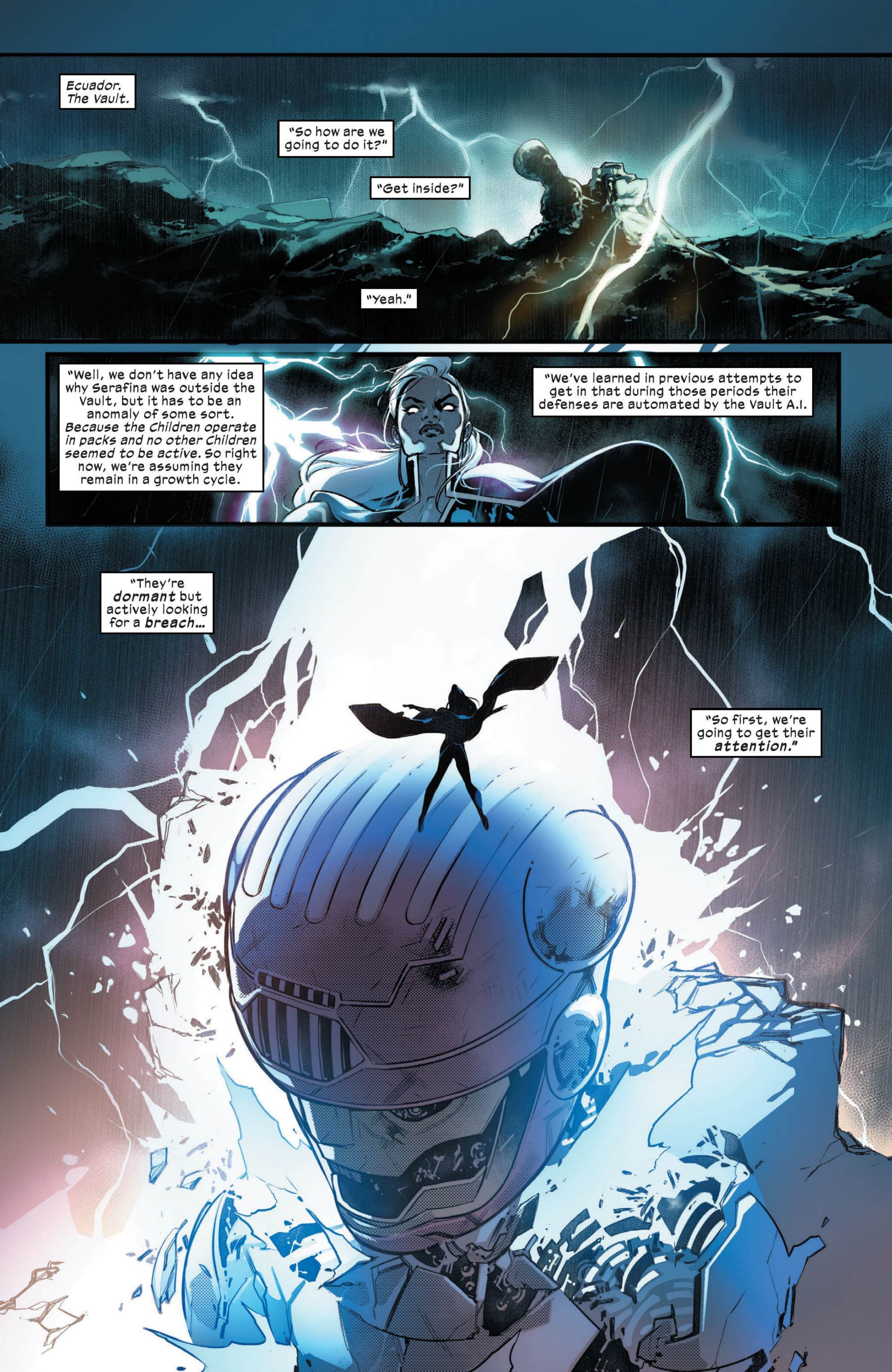
CITY [UPGRADE]: GLOBAL.
CLASS: ALL.
LEVEL: THREE.

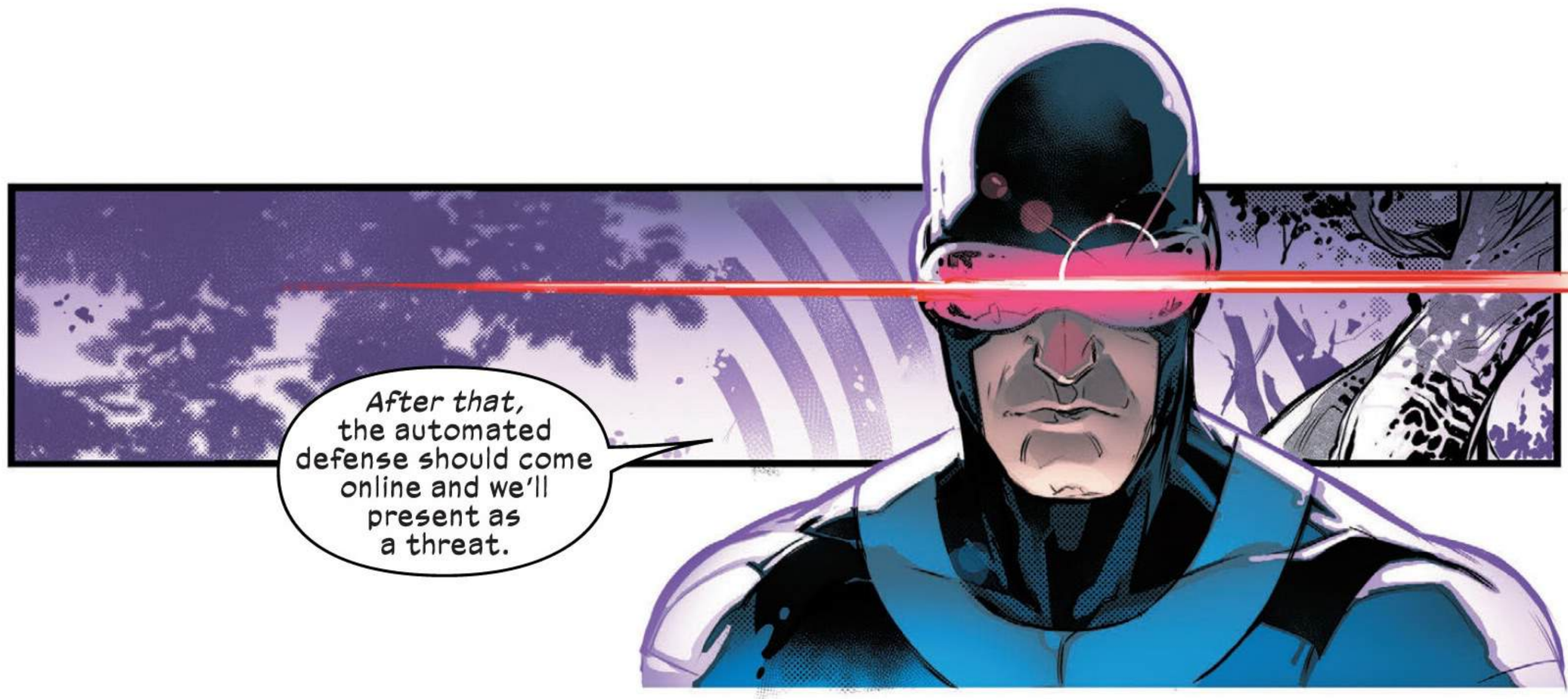
//////
//////
POD 1/600 [EMPIRE].....LEVEL: TWO [UPGRADE]
POD 2/600 [JUDGE].....LEVEL: TWO [UPGRADE]
POD 3/600 [BUILDER].....LEVEL: TWO [UPGRADE]
POD 4/600 [SWORD].....LEVEL: TWO [UPGRADE]
POD 5/600 [RECONNAISSANCE].....LEVEL: --- [RESTORE]
\\\\\\
_____

.....RESTORE CHILD: CLASS: SANGRE.....LEVEL: ONE [RESTORE]
.....RESTORE CHILD: CLASS: PERRO.....LEVEL: ONE [RESTORE]
.....UPGRADE CHILD: CLASS: SERAFINA.....LEVEL: TWO [UPGRADE]
.....RESTORE CHILD: CLASS: AGUJA.....LEVEL: ONE [RESTORE]
.....RESTORE CHILD: CLASS: FUEGO.....LEVEL: ONE [RESTORE]
_____

//////
POD 6/600 [KNIFE].....LEVEL: TWO [UPGRADE]
POD 7/600 [FLIGHT].....LEVEL: TWO [UPGRADE]
POD 8/600 [COMMUNICATION].....LEVEL: TWO [UPGRADE]
POD 9/600 [TEACHER].....LEVEL: TWO [UPGRADE]
POD 10/600 [SOLDIER].....LEVEL: ONE [UPGRADE]
POD 11/600 [SOLDIER].....LEVEL: TWO [UPGRADE]
POD 12/600 [SOLDIER].....LEVEL: TWO [UPGRADE]
POD 13/600 [SOLDIER].....LEVEL: ONE [UPGRADE]
POD 14/600 [SOLDIER].....LEVEL: ONE [UPGRADE]
POD 15/600 [ENVOY].....



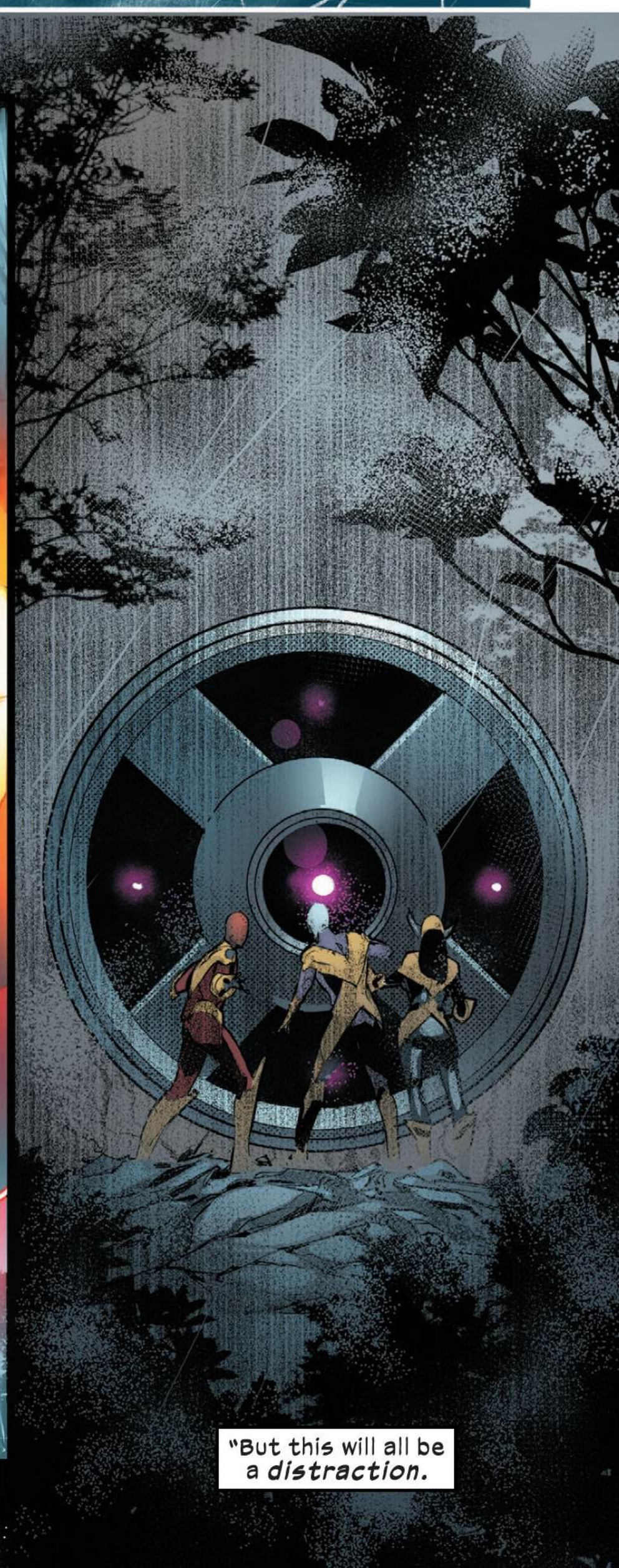

Ecuador. The Vault.
"So how are we going to do it?"
"Get inside?"
"Yeah."
"Well, we don't have any idea why Serafina was outside the Vault, but it has to be an anomaly of some sort. *Because the Children operate in packs and no other Children seemed to be active.* So right now, we're assuming they remain in a growth cycle.
"We've learned in previous attempts to get in that during those periods their defenses are automated by the Vault A.I.
"They're ***dormant*** but actively looking for a ***breach***...
"So first, we're going to get their ***attention***."

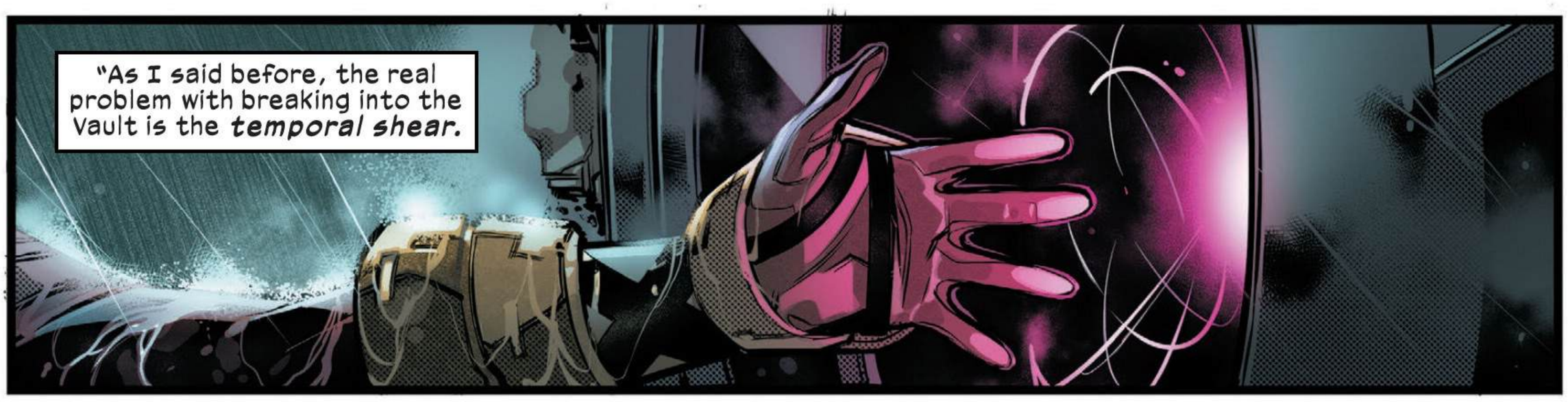

After that, the automated defense should come online and we'll present as a threat.

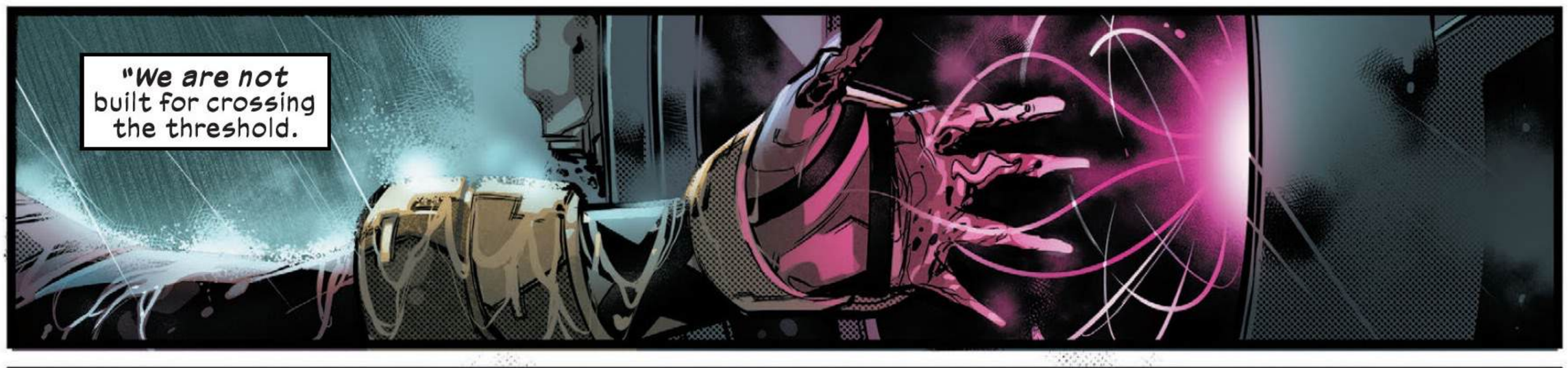
"We'll give them a good show...

Here they come.

"Make them feel it.


"But this will all be a distraction.


"As I said before, the real problem with breaking into the Vault is the *temporal shear.*

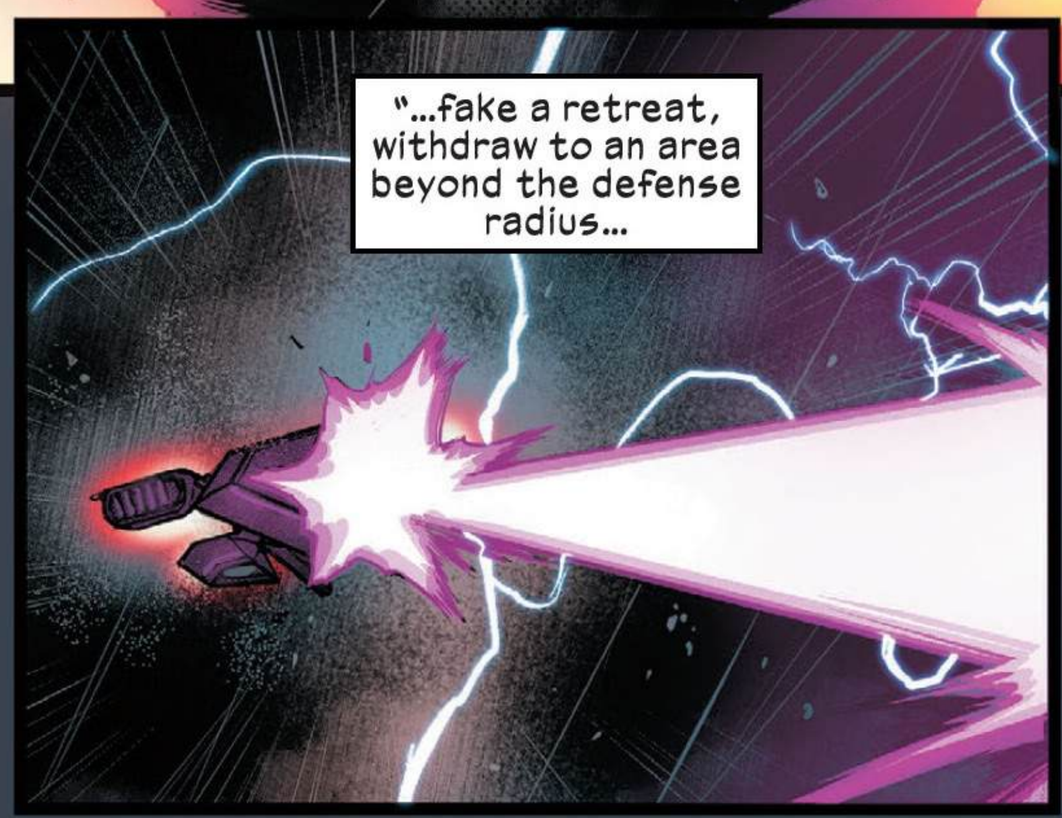

"*We are not* built for crossing the threshold.

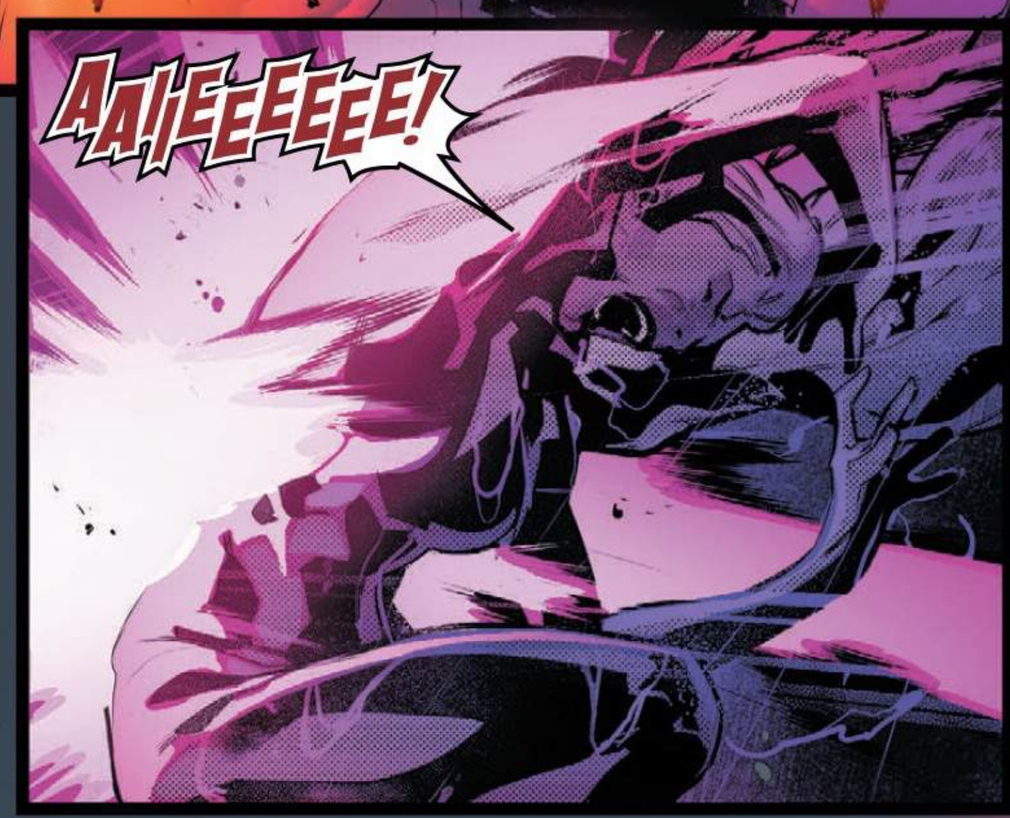
"*Which is why we're sending the three of you in...*

"We think *you are* built for it."

Forge has repurposed a few of the Orchis translocators we salvaged in South America, so you'll use that to get inside instead of cracking a door open.
Because, after all, the point is to get you inside without attracting their attention...

"After that, we'll back off slowly...


"...fake a retreat, withdraw to an area beyond the defense radius...


AAIEEEEEE!

Got her!

Let's get out of here.
"...and let the vault defenses think they've done their job.

"Mission accomplished."
We're clear.
Are you okay?

I'm...I'm fine. Just a little shook up. Don't worry about me.
Did they get in?

"Yes. Last I saw them they were at one of the Vault doors.

"And then they weren't."

So that's it.
It's just that simple: We go there, draw their fire and get you inside.
And once you're in... you get to work.

[////.....0]
[////.....0]
____//
[PHASE DISTURBANCE DETECTED]
//////
//////
ASYMMETRICAL [SECONDARY THRESHOLD] BREACH.
SCANNING FOR CONTAGION.....SCAN COMPLETE:...[CONTAMINATED]
//////
SUBJECTS UNIDENTIFIED:.....CLASS: UNKNOWN.[LEVEL: UNKNOWN]
//////
//////
//////
//////
[_____].....[___]
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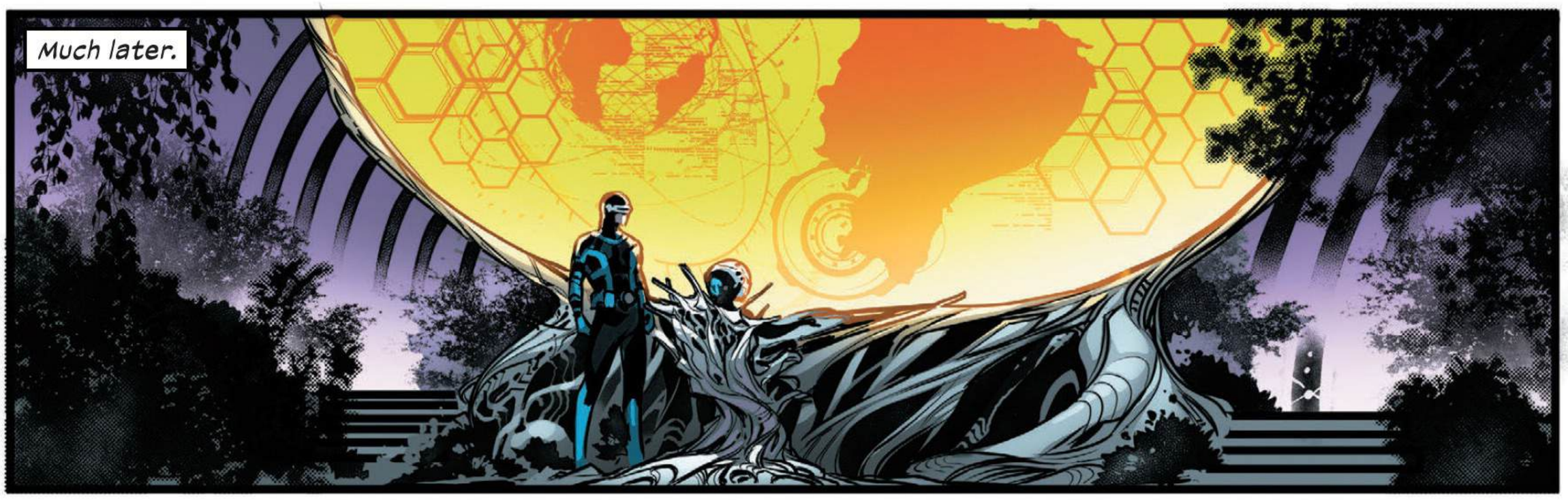
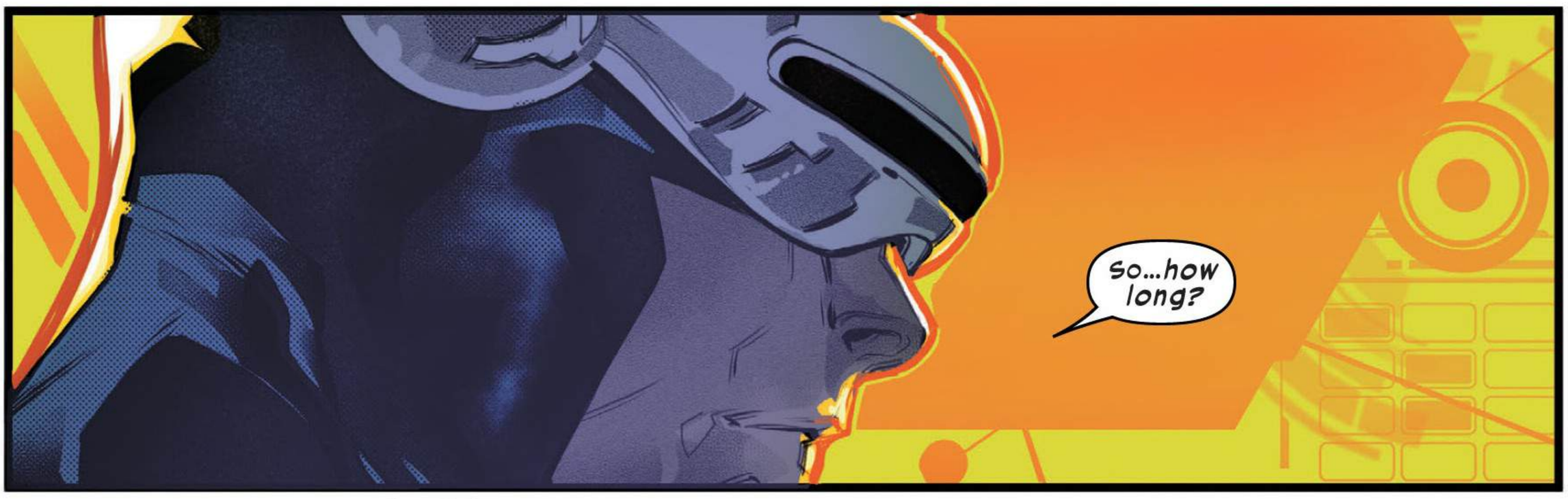
ANOMALY DETECTED.
VAULT RESPONSE INCOMING.
PROTECT THE CITY.
Oh, #$%@.


Much later.

How long?
Three months. Five days. And some change.


So...how long?

Best guess? Five hundred and thirty-seven years.
And some change.
Yes.

My God... what have I done?
What the hell was I thinking?

# The Oracle

6

*Then.*

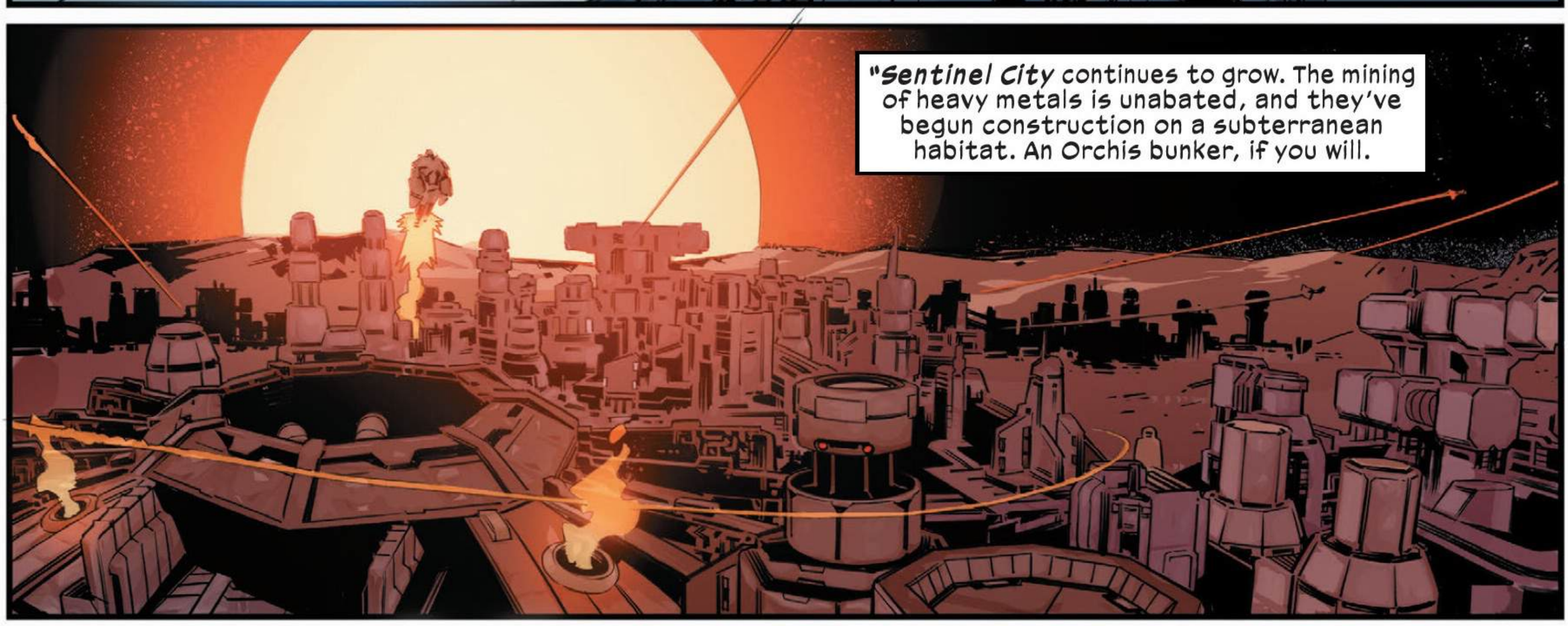
"I wish you could see this, Irene."

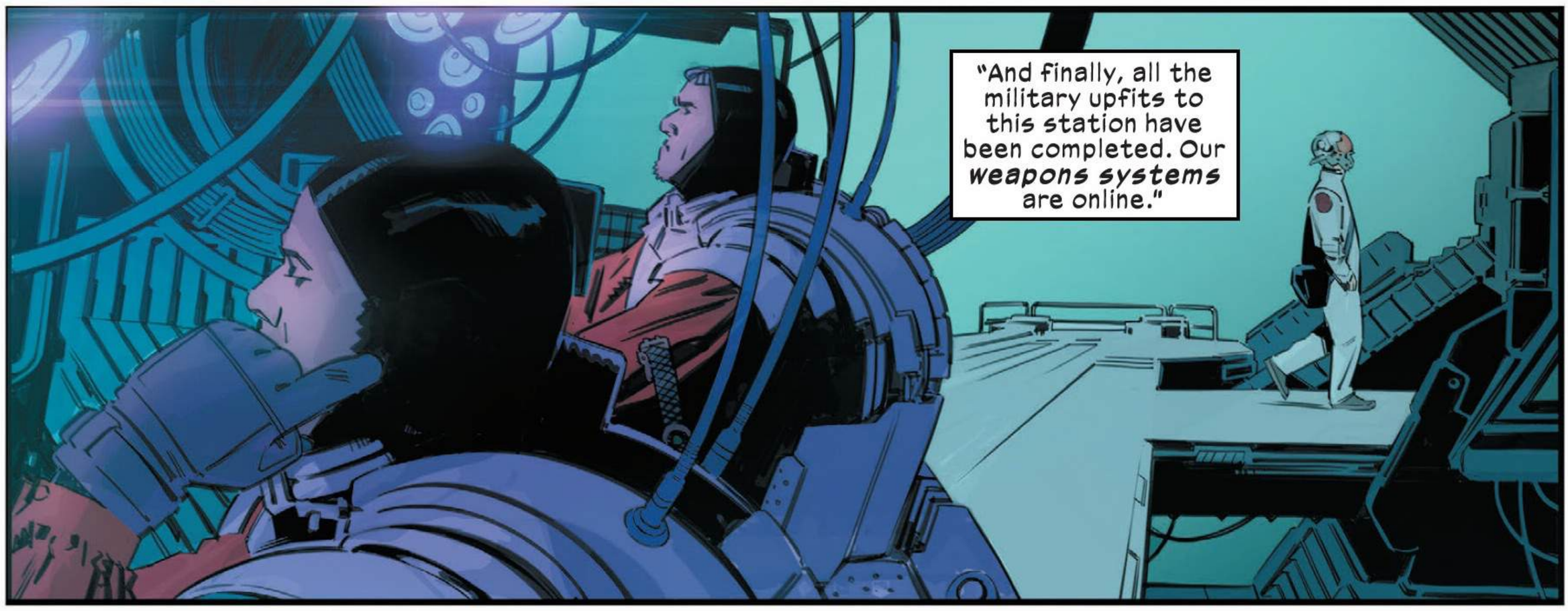
"I've seen more sunsets than you can imagine, Raven. The collapse of all things and the end of days.

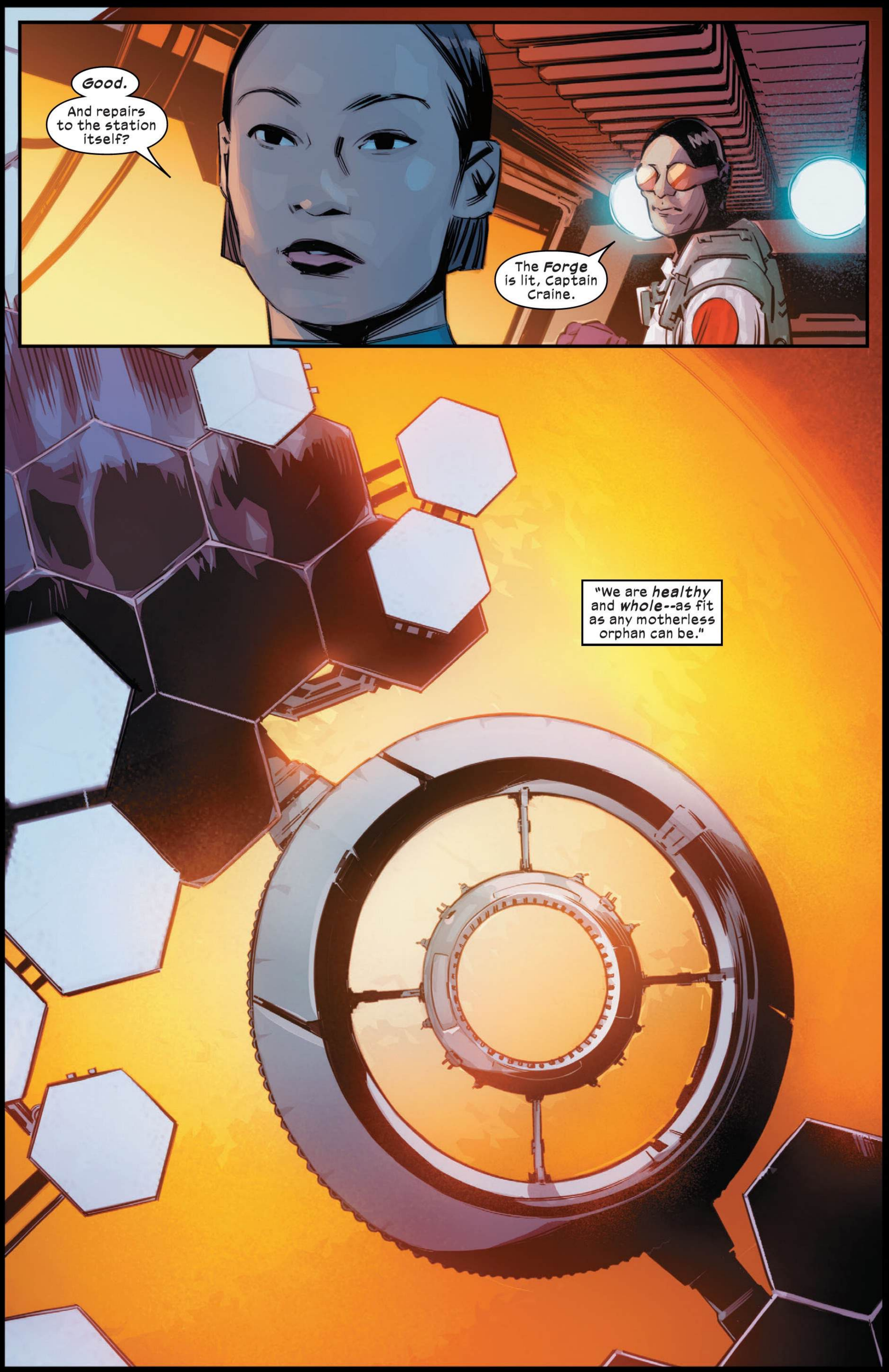
"I have seen enough."

NOW.
Let's go all the way around, Mister Sand. I want to *hear* the *choir sing.*
Yes, ma'am.

"We have good ping from the entire network of ***defense platforms*** arrayed along Mercury's orbit.
"We also have a strong signal from the ***watchtower*** on Venus.

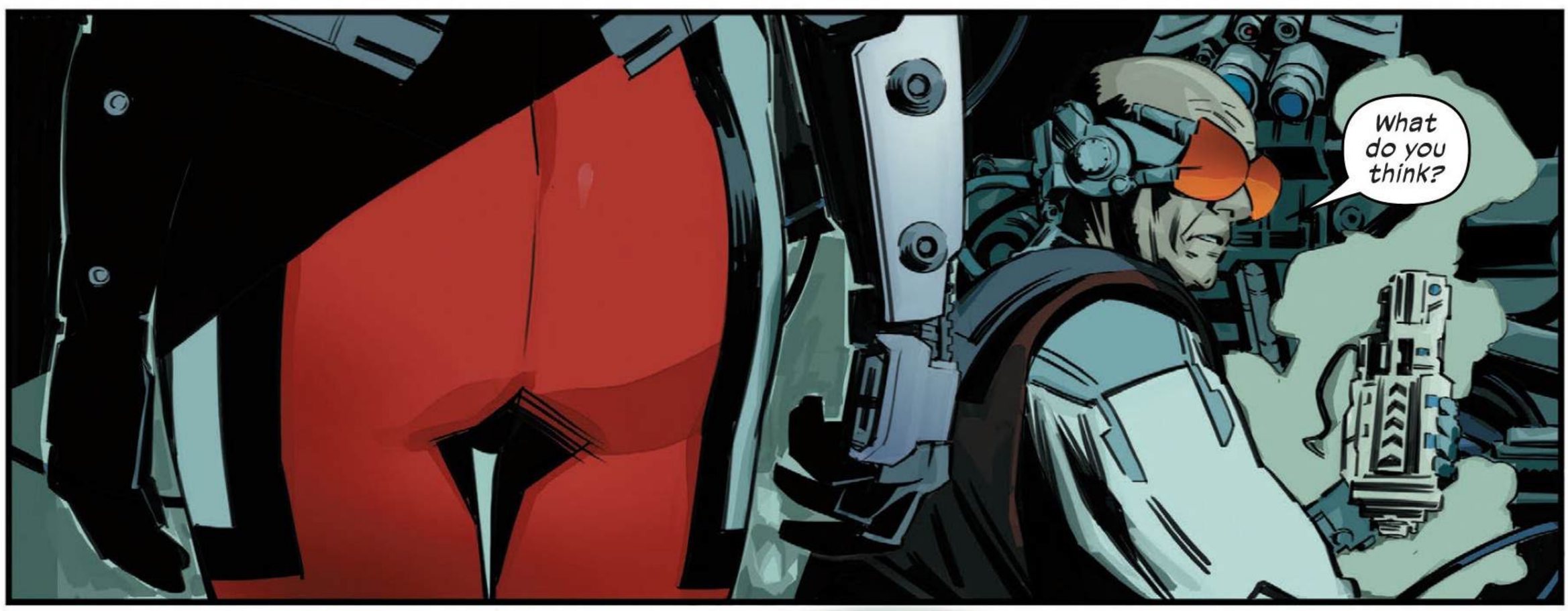

"***Sentinel City*** continues to grow. The mining of heavy metals is unabated, and they've begun construction on a subterranean habitat. An Orchis bunker, if you will.


"And finally, all the military upfits to this station have been completed. Our ***weapons systems*** are online."


Good.
And repairs to the station itself?
The *Forge* is lit, Captain Craine.
"We are *healthy* and *whole*--as fit as any motherless orphan can be."

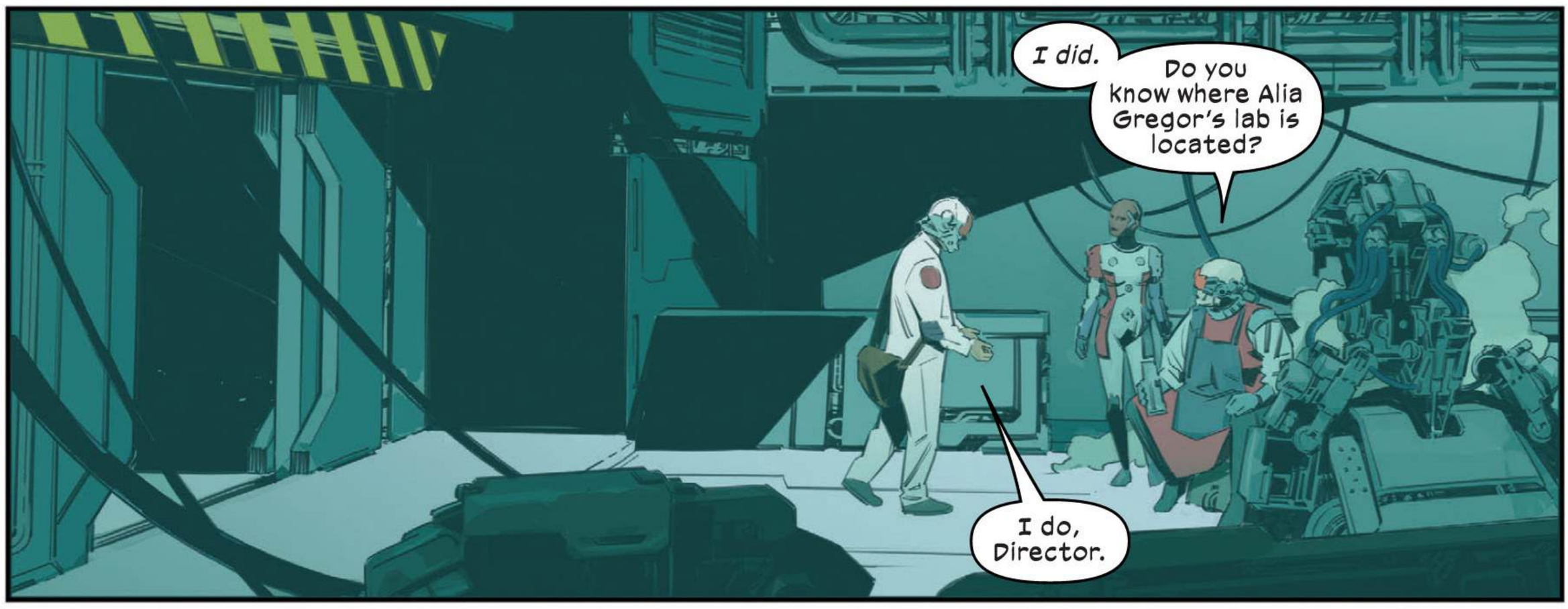
Later.
They say that perfection comes from repetition and repetition only.
That perfection is all craft and no passion...

Well, I for one have no interest in being perfect, my dear Omega. For I am an artist.
And with that last stroke...
TINK!
...my work is complete.


What do you think?

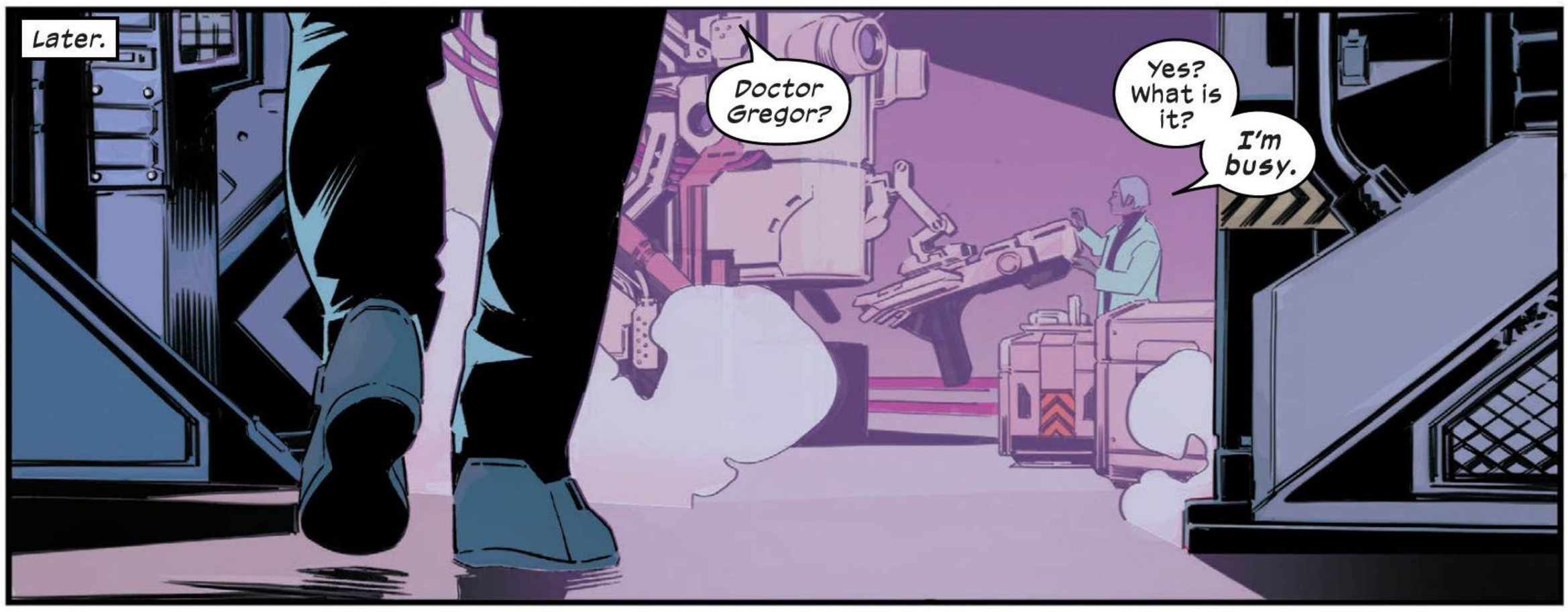
I think it looks perfect.

Excuse me, Director.
You called for a courier?

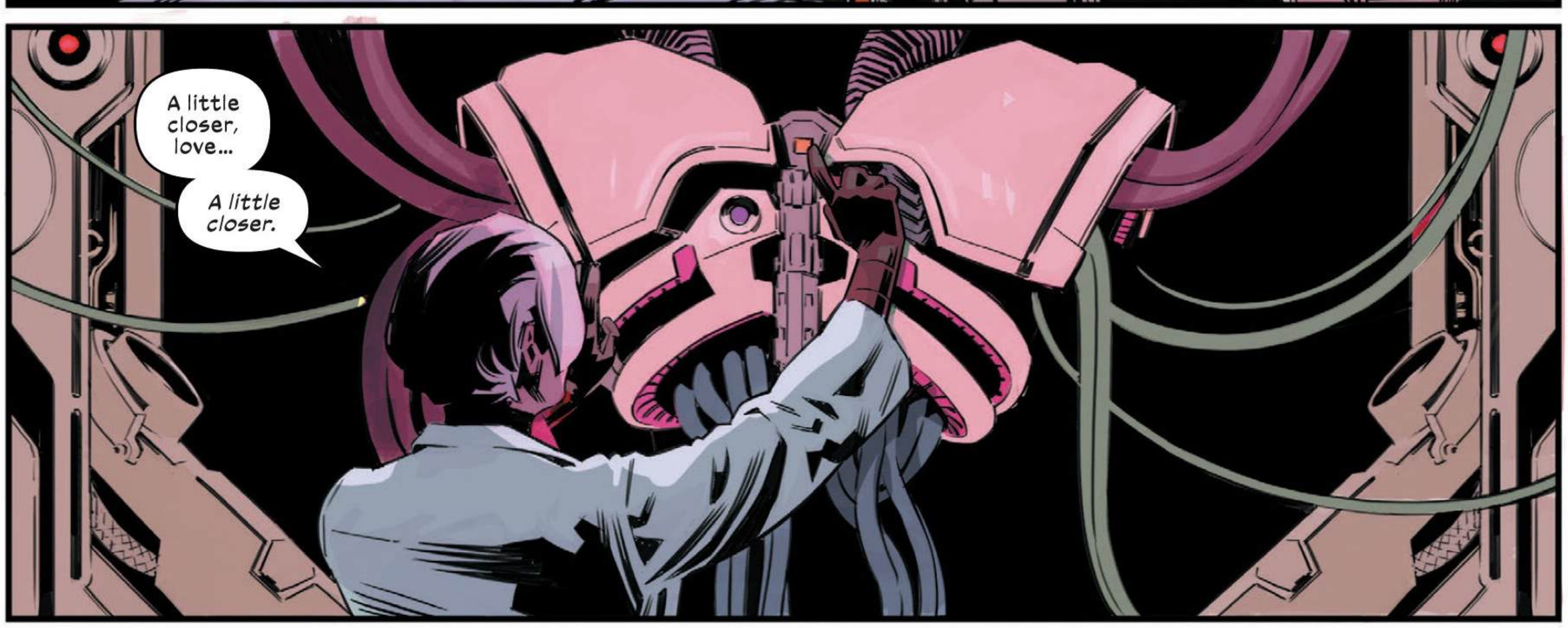

I did.
Do you know where Alia Gregor's lab is located?
I do, Director.

Please take this to her *immediately*. She's waiting on it.
*Special project.*

Now...*am I wrong*, Omega... or are you developing a devilish sense of humor?
The time will come, Director Devo, when it might become necessary to engage others on a truly emotional level.
*This isn't it.*
My goodness, *look at you...*
Self-aware, evolving...a *work of art.*


Later.
Doctor Gregor?
Yes? What is it?
I'm busy.

The director asked me to deliver this to you.
And so you have.
Just set it on the table and leave.
Thank you.


A little closer, love...
A little closer.

Then. Plans.
I have demands.
Do you, now?
Is helping your fellow mutant not reward enough for Raven Darkhölme?
No. It isn't.
I need more.
Yes, I see that...
But it's fair, I suppose. We have further demands as well.

Really?
I'm afraid so.
Is helping your fellow mutant not reward enough for the *great* Charles Xavier?
We're building a better mutant world, Mystique.
And everyone who would live in it owes *something.*
Including you.
We're going to be sending a team to the Mother Mold orbiting the sun.
You'll go with them...*run the mission,* but there's something else we need from you.
*What's that?*
Plant a *seed...*
...for a *winter harvest.*

Then.
The Mission.
BAMF
BAMF
Mystique?
Mystique! Are you there?

Stop screaming in my head, Summers.
I hear you...

I got turned around, but I'm here now. I've...
Hold on. Something's...

...not right.
Hey there. Got some bad news for you.

NO!

"You plant *our* seed on the Orchis station...

"***We*** get what ***we*** want--and then you get what you want."

*And we both know what that is, don't we?*

"Yes...

"Irene."

!

Then.
Resurrection.
There you are...
Even knowing I could bring you back...a part of me dies when any of you do...
So let's not do that again, *shall we?*
*Did...* did it work?
It did. You succeeded, and your sacrifice was not in vain...
It was a ***gift,*** and in the *giving,* you ***saved us all.***

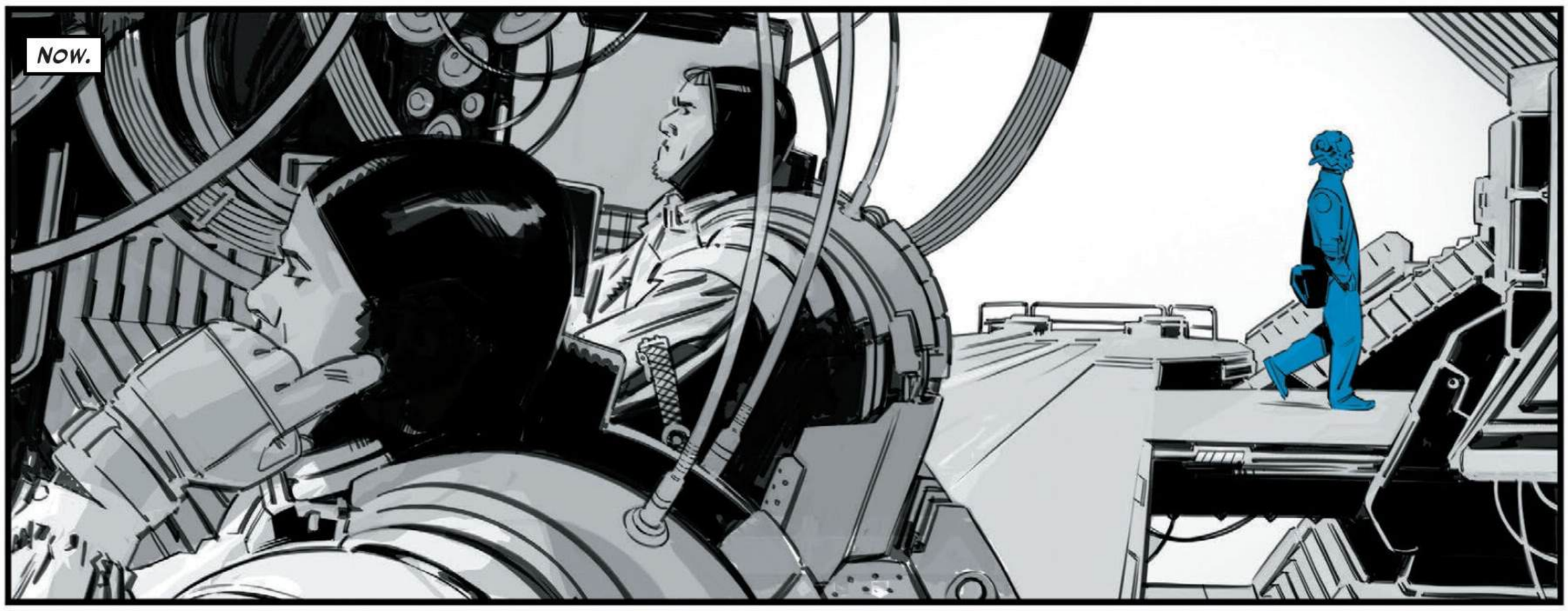
Later.
"You saved us all..."
...and for that we are grateful.
But you need more.
All of you died beyond the reach of Cerebro, meaning you were restored to your last backup before you left.
The Mother Mold is gone, yes, but as to the other...
We believe you succeeded. But we need to know that you did.
And how would you know if I planted the flower or not?
We wouldn't.
We believe you did.
But we need to know that you did.

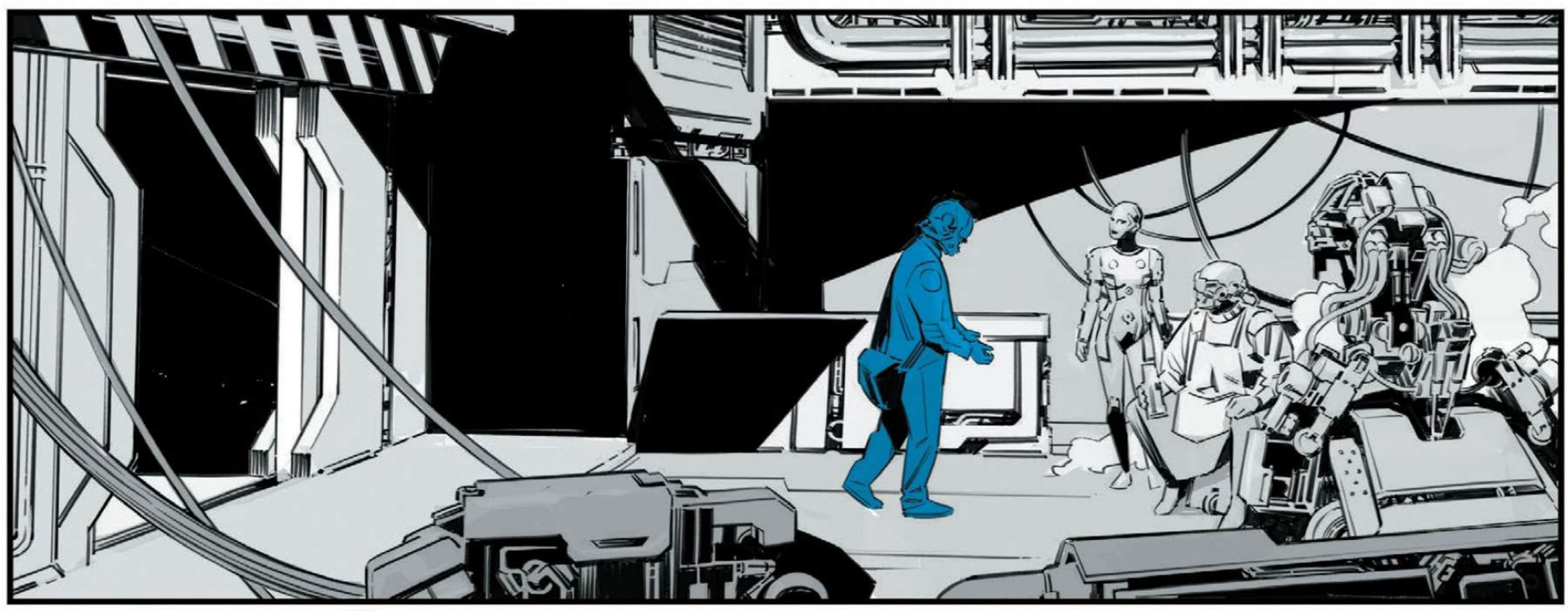
So what happens if I walk through the gate and I didn't grow a gate on the other side?
You won't go anywhere-- *you'll just walk straight through.*
The gateway flowers are grown in tandem. The other side has to be active for it to work.

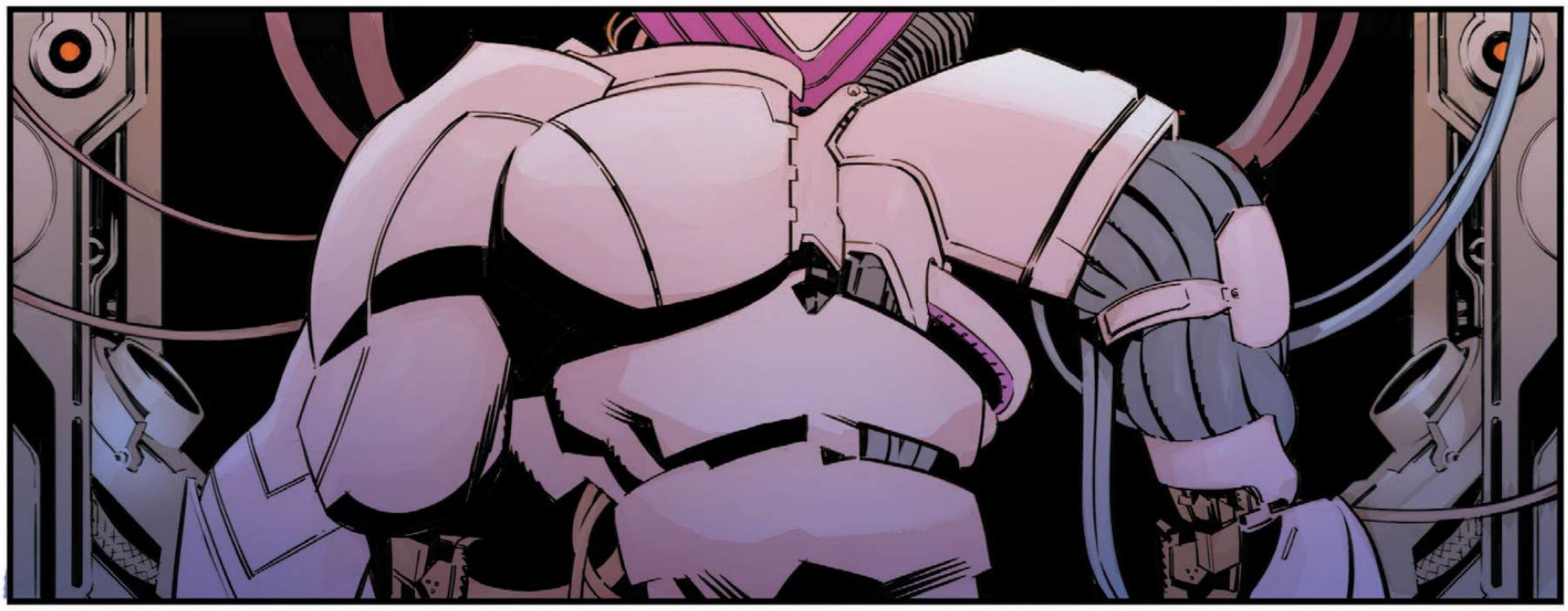
The problem is if they've found it and you're walking into a trap...*or worse.*

"But we have to know.

"So off you go."


NOW.





"Bad news...

"We took our shot...and we missed."
What happened?
Most of it's beyond my ken, but it looks to me that your belief that Nimrod comes from the Mother Mold is wrong.
There's a scientist there--Alia Gregor--who's building something that looks just like one.
Why didn't you take care of it?
Haven't you heard?
We have laws.
Not for that. Not for them.
And let's be honest, not for you...if you thought it needed doing.
So why didn't you?

Because you *needed* to *know.*
And now you do.

*No.* It's more than that.
Out with it, Raven.

I've been *helpful.* I've been *cooperative.* As much as it's not in my nature, *I have done my part.*
But I'm not doing one more thing until you give her to me.

That wasn't the deal.

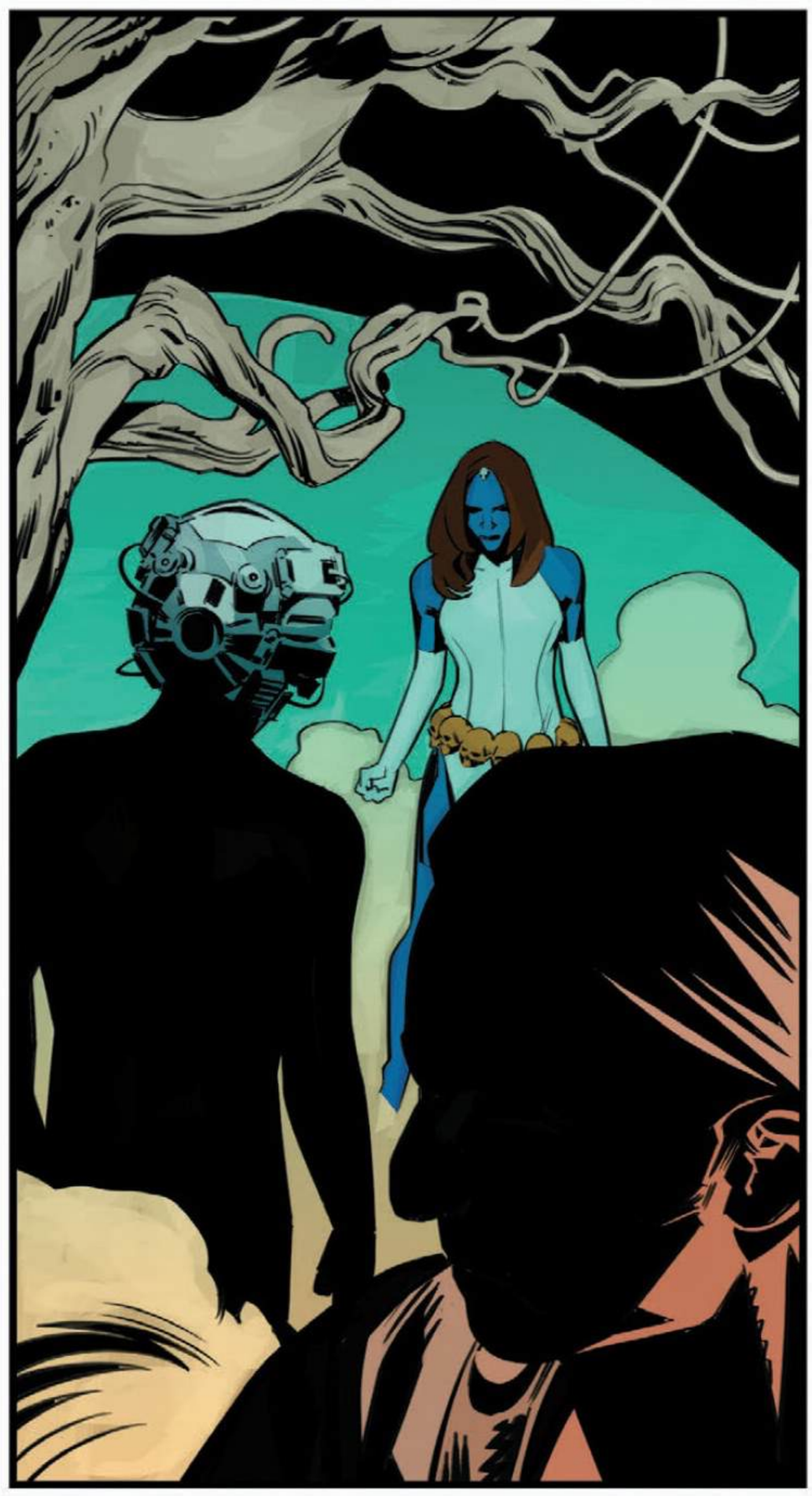
*I don't care.*
*Bring her back!*

Raven...
After all this time--*after all the years of you stabbing your own kind in the back just to get what you want*--after all that, do you really think we can trust you?

I WANT MY WIFE BACK!

And she will return...
...when you have earned it.

We need you to do this.
It must be done.

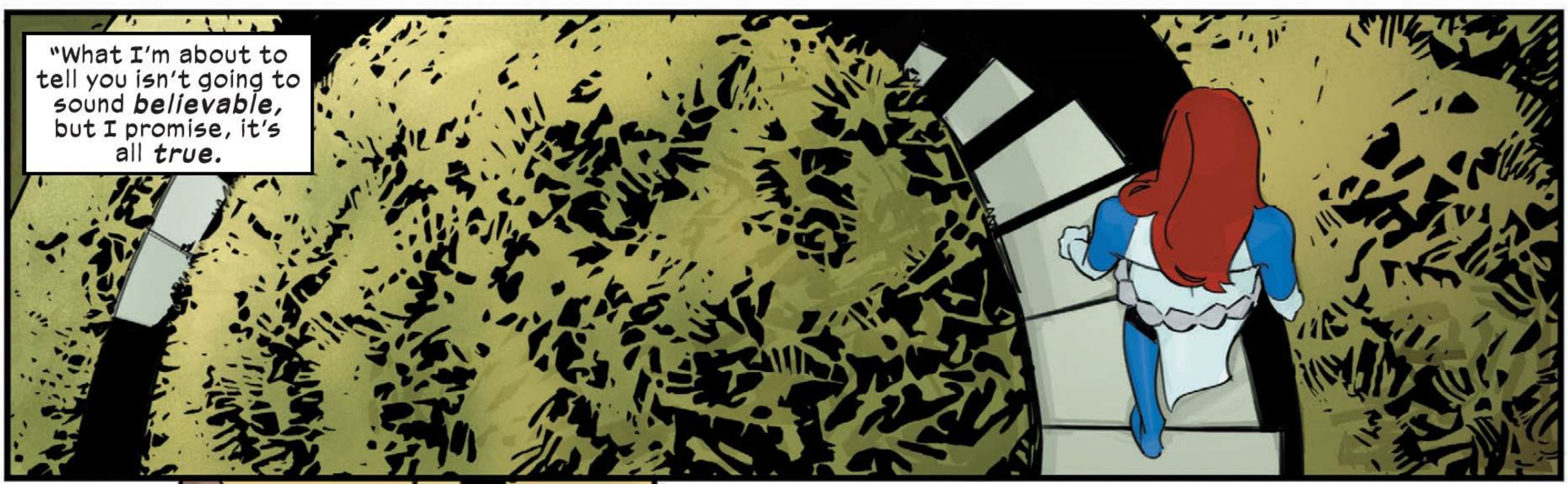


We have some time. She's not that far along.
I'll... I'll go back tomorrow.

Good.
Thank you.

I hate you, Charles.
I have always hated you.
Hated and feared. I fear I'm growing numb to it.
Not because it doesn't bother me, but because all of this is...bigger than how we feel...
It's bigger than me...
"...and it's certainly bigger than you."

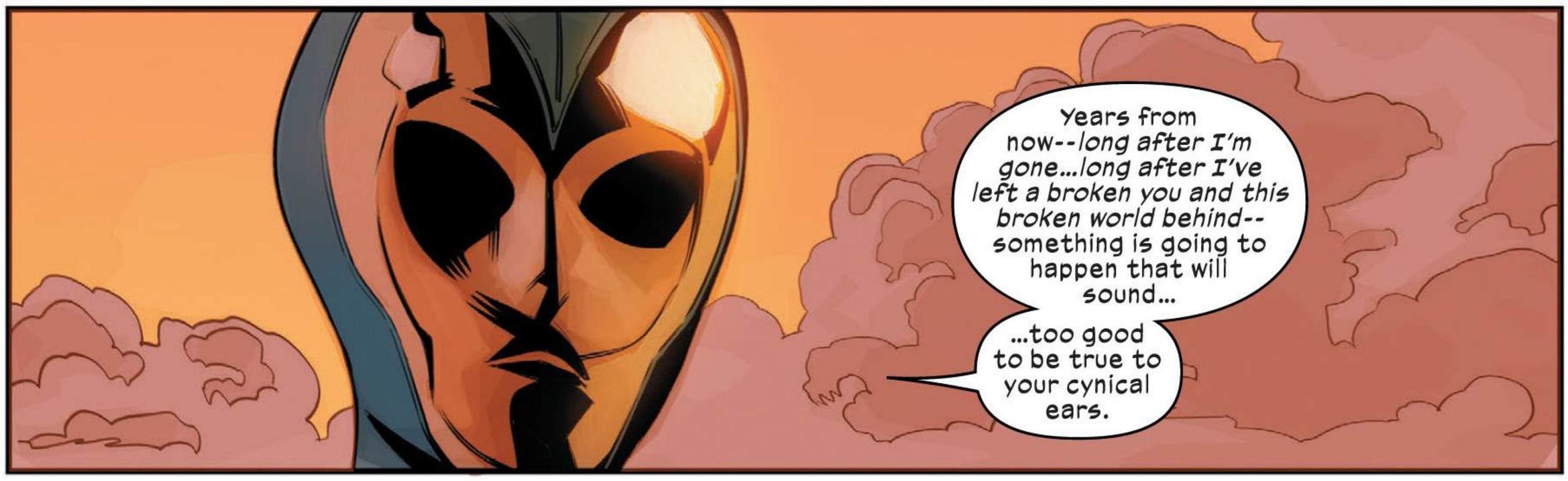
The Oracle.


"What I'm about to tell you isn't going to sound *believable,* but I promise, it's all *true.*

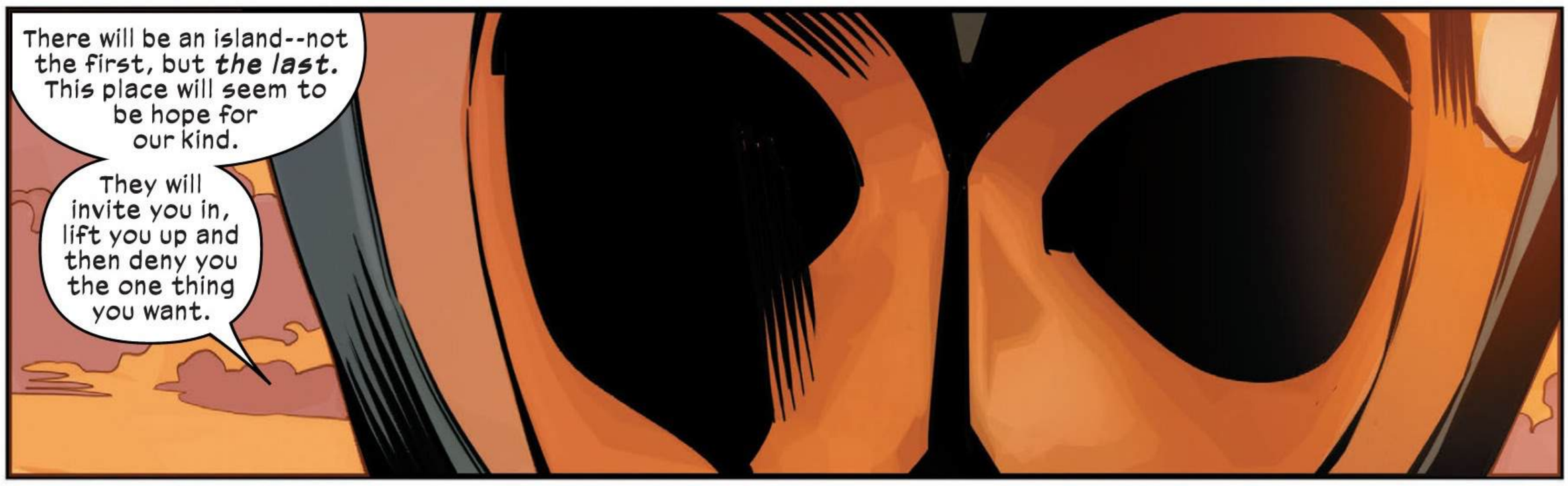
"I want you to listen *carefully.*

"Every word of it."

I don't know why you're talking to me like this, Irene.
Yes. I'm a skeptic, but I always believed everything *you* have told me.
*Well*...let's put that to the test, shall we?


Years from now--*long after I'm gone...long after I've left a broken you and this broken world behind*--something is going to happen that will sound...
...too good to be true to your cynical ears.

Gone? If you can see your death, then--
You're focusing on the wrong part, my dear.
***Listen.*** Hear the words of ***an oracle:***


There will be an island--not the first, but ***the last.*** This place will seem to be hope for our kind.
They will invite you in, lift you up and then deny you the one thing you want.

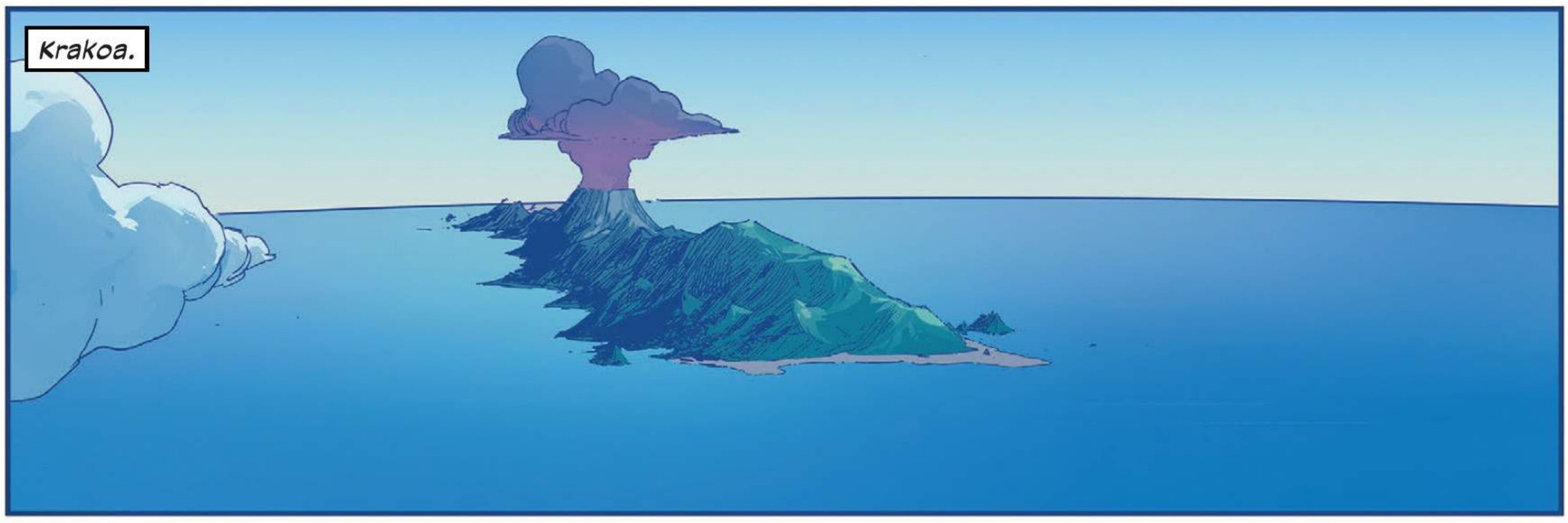
Oh, they will promise it to you... but they'll do everything they can not to honor their word because they're afraid.
They want us blind for some reason. But you and I, *my dear,* were born ***to see.***
*I don't understand any of this...*

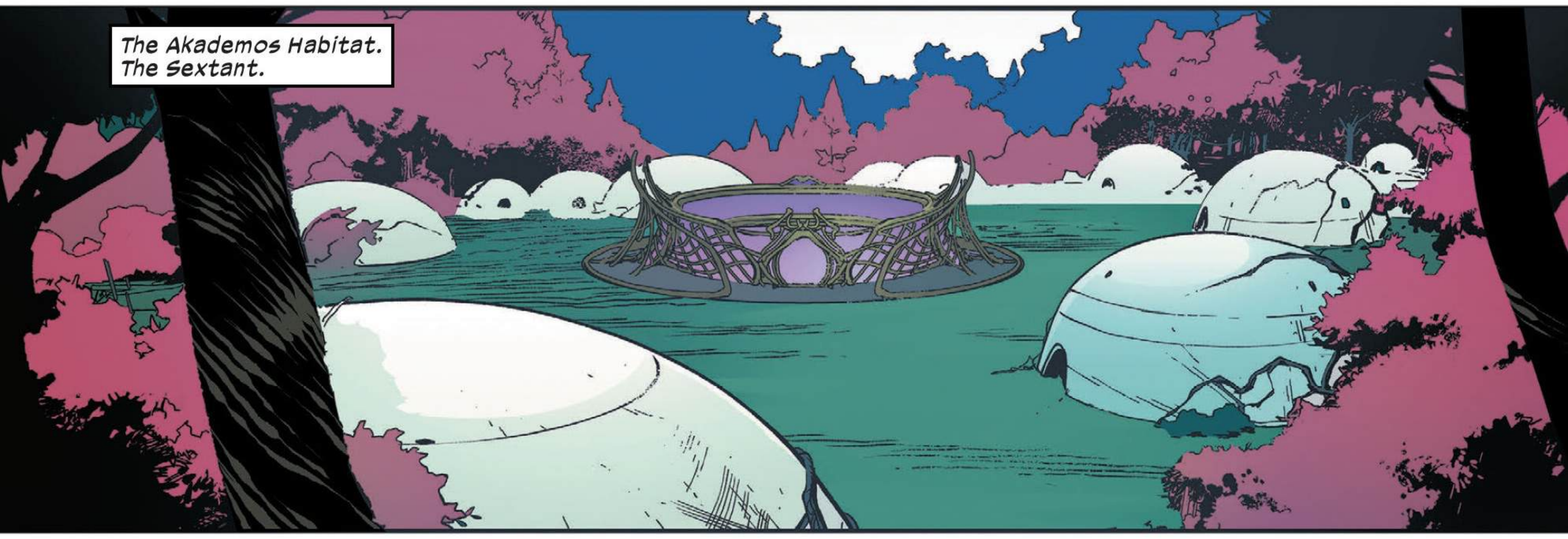
"I know. But when it's time, *you will.*
"And when those days come, remember these words: ***BRING ME BACK.***
"And if you ***cannot***...if they ***will not***...
"...then burn that place to the ground."

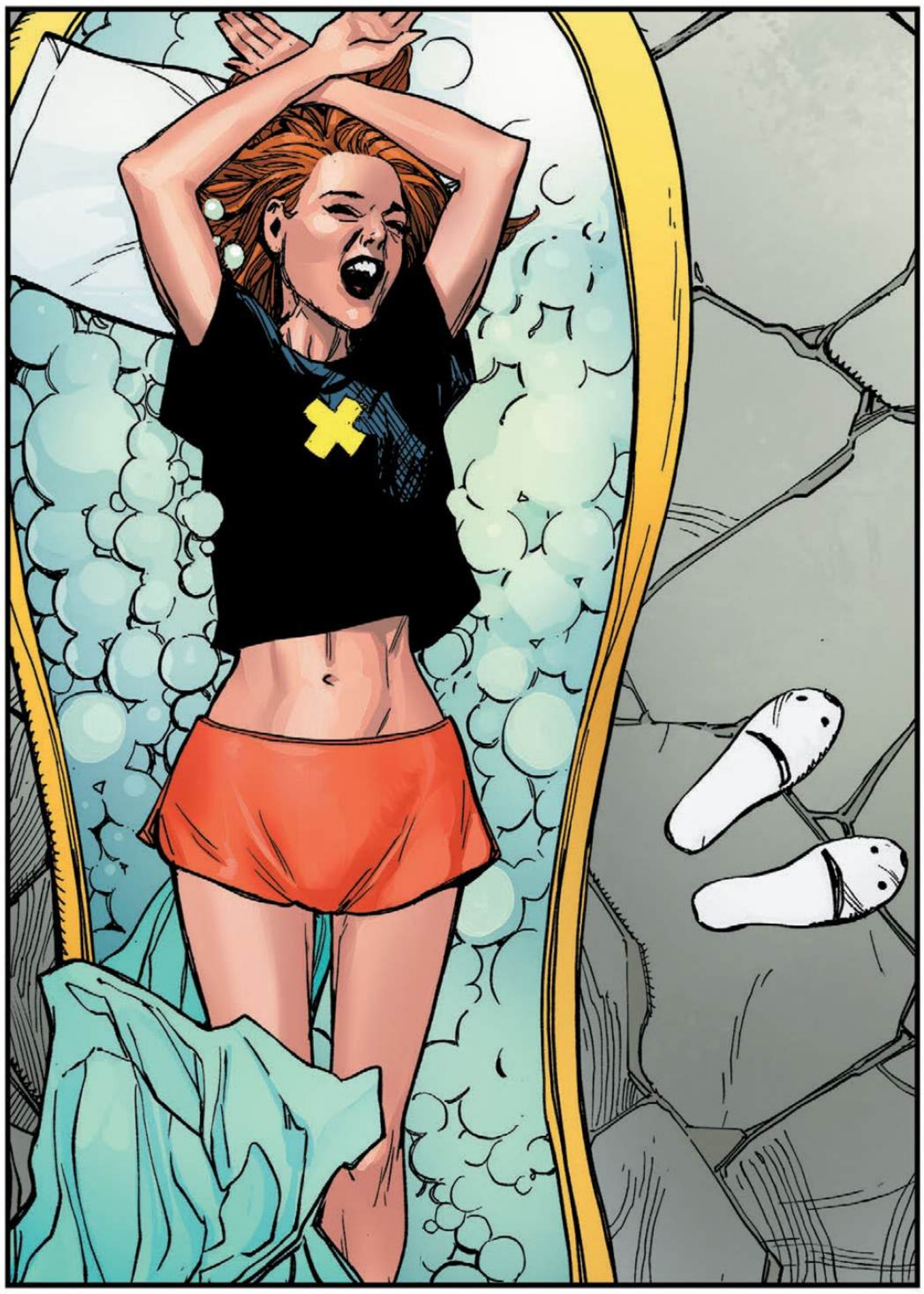
Chapter 07

# Lifedeath

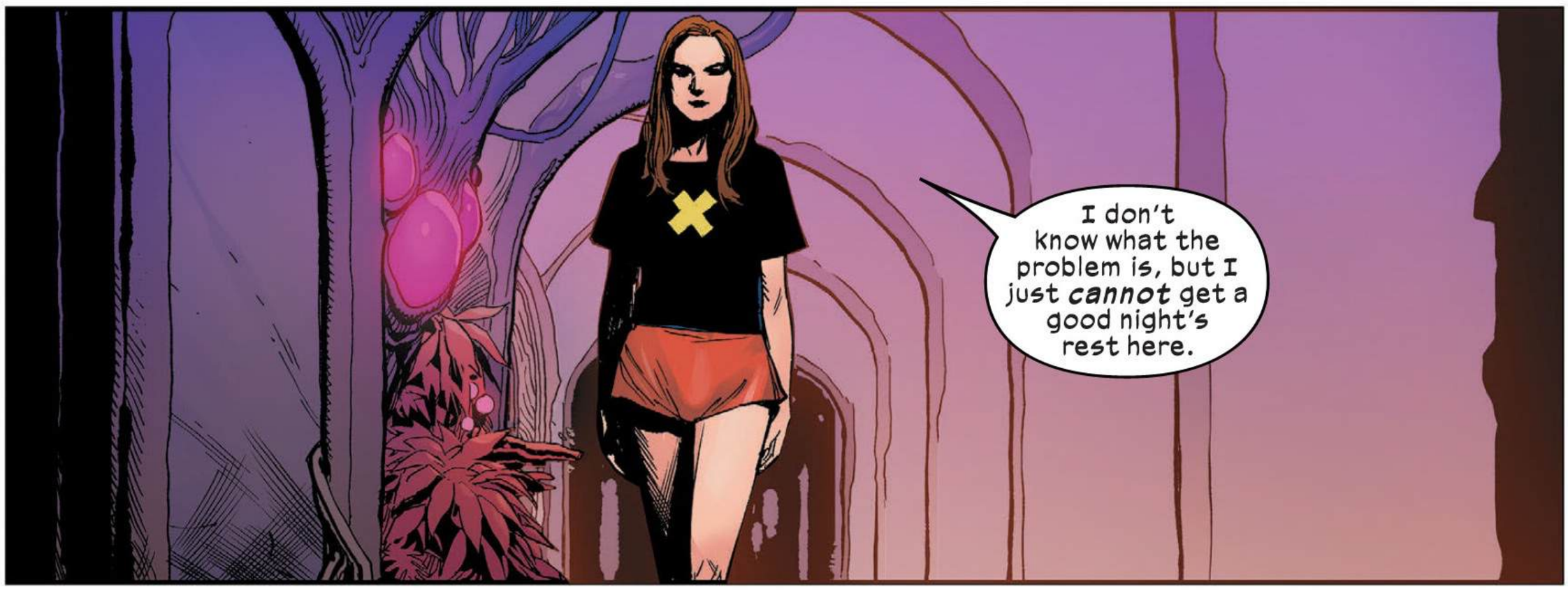
7


Krakoa.


The Akademos Habitat.
The Sextant.

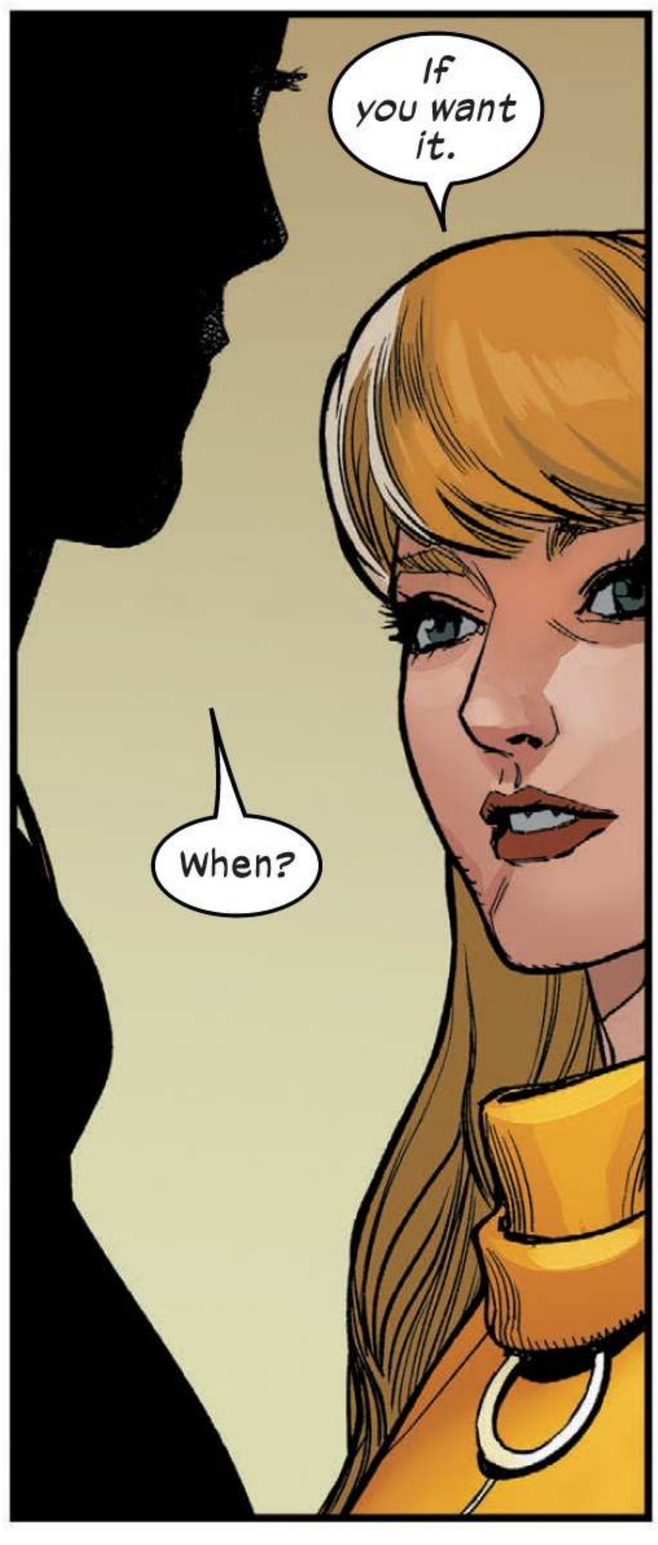


*Sigh*
Rise and shine, kiddo.
It's another day in *paradise.*

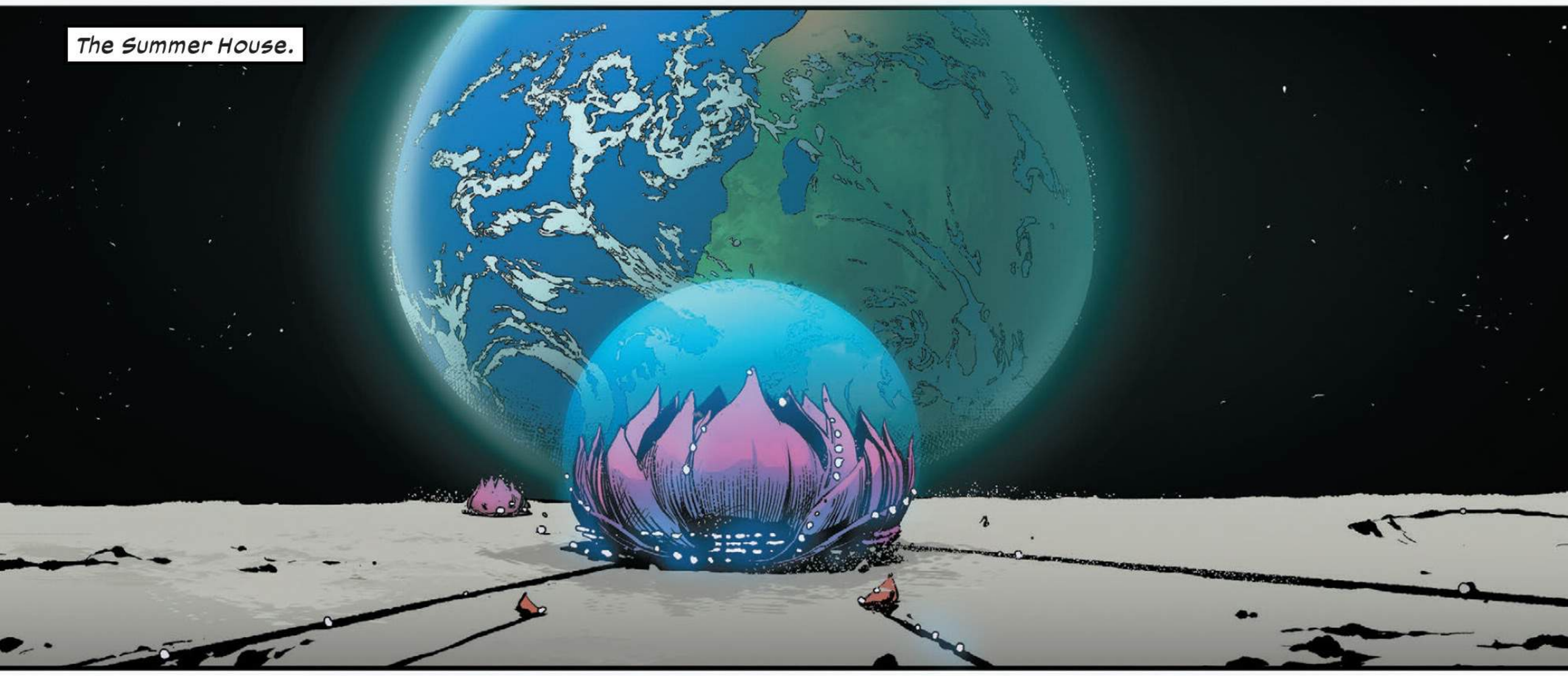

I don't know what the problem is, but I just *cannot* get a good night's rest here.

Do we have any of that coffee the green kid is famo--
*What's wrong?*
Melody, we...we've got some--
Word came down from the Council, sis.
*It's time.*

*Crucible?*


*If you want it.*
When?

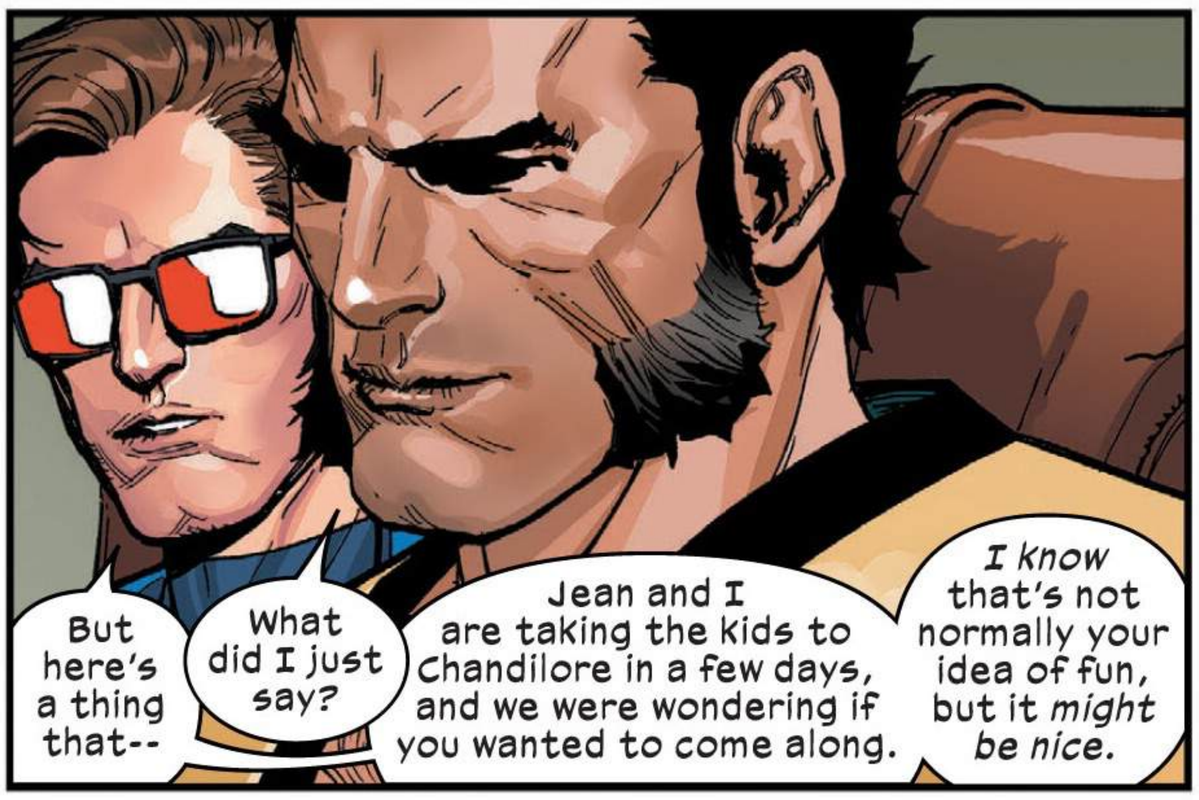
*Today.*


The Summer House.

Couldn't sleep?
Never do.

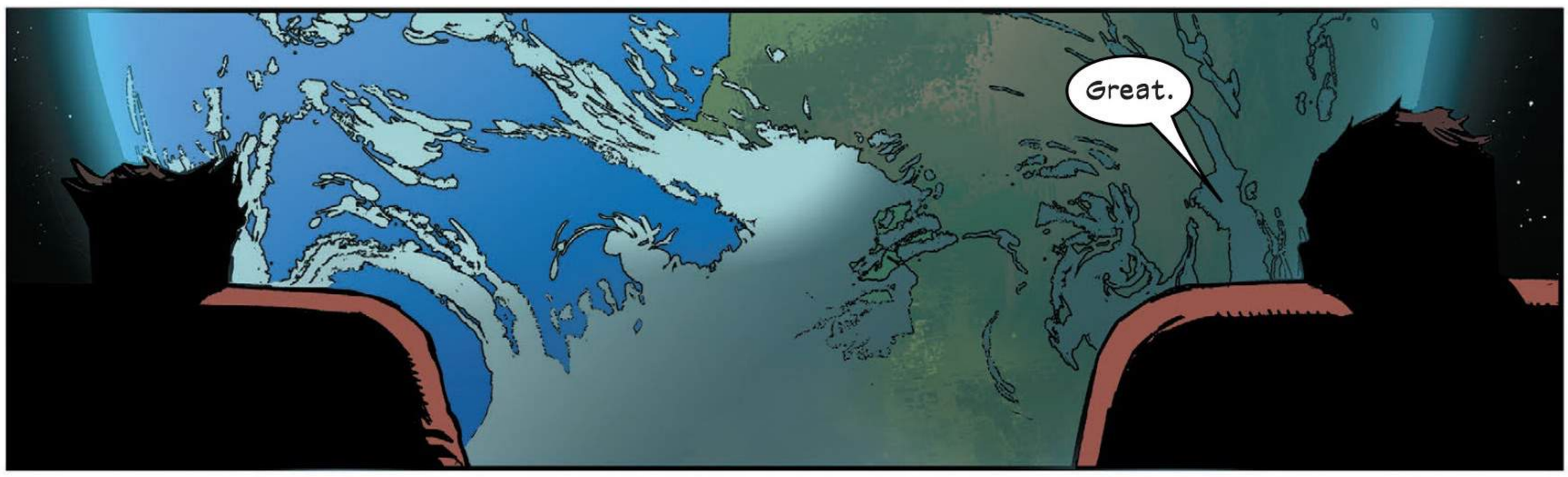
It's all that hair. Too hot for covers and it's too cool without them.

Can we just sit here *like men,* drink our coffee and and enjoy a quiet moment? *For once?*
I guess.


But here's a thing that--
What did I just say?
Jean and I are taking the kids to Chandilore in a few days, and we were wondering if you wanted to come along.
*I know* that's not normally your idea of fun, but it *might be nice.*

The scenery at that place is something else.
It sure is.

Jeannie in a bikini.
Scott in a Speedo.
Heh.
Well, who could say no to that?

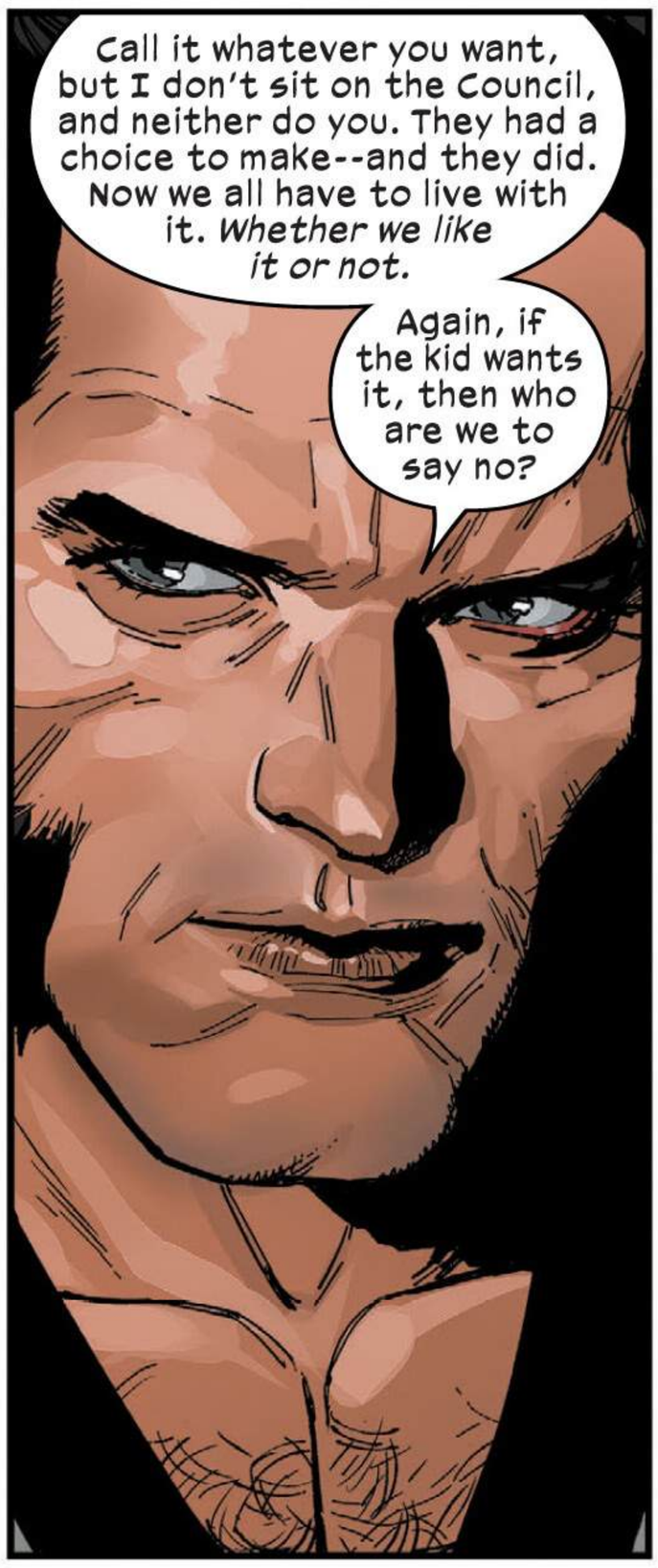

Great.

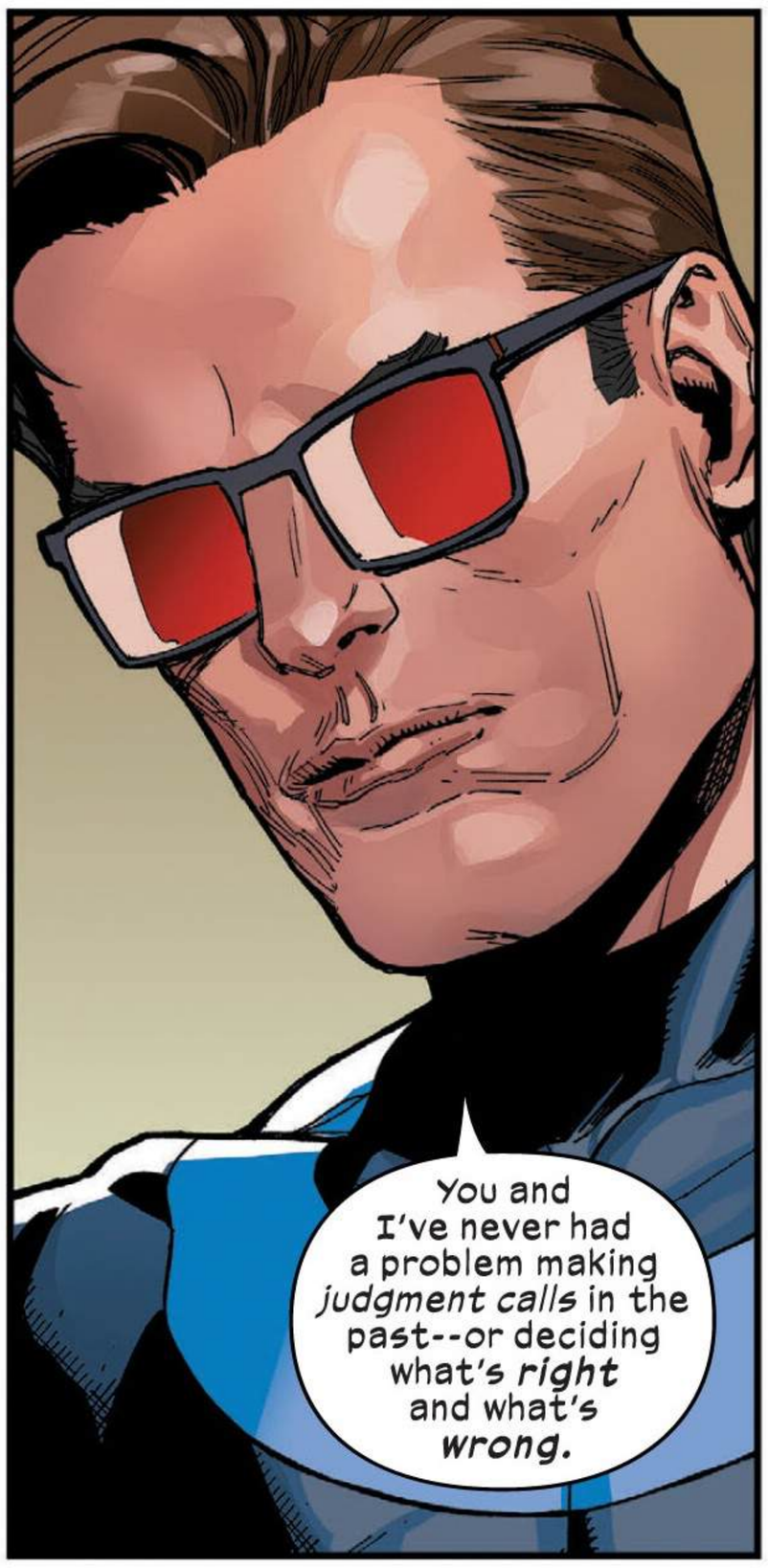
So...

Crucible is today.

Yes, it is.
Are you going?
NO.
No, I am not.

You think it's wrong?
Didn't say that. Even if I felt that way...it ain't our choice to make, is it?
Logan, that feels like a cop out.


Call it whatever you want, but I don't sit on the Council, and neither do you. They had a choice to make--and they did. Now we all have to live with it. *Whether we like it or not.*
Again, if the kid wants it, then who are we to say no?


You and I've never had a problem making *judgment calls* in the past--or deciding what's ***right*** and what's ***wrong.***

Not sure that's something we should hang our hat on, Slim...
Look, there's no getting around the fact that we have to have a way to deal with this particular problem--*there's no avoiding it*--but do I love the choice? ***No.***
But if you're looking for absolution or some kinda answer from on high, you're talkin' to the wrong guy. ***Go find a priest.***

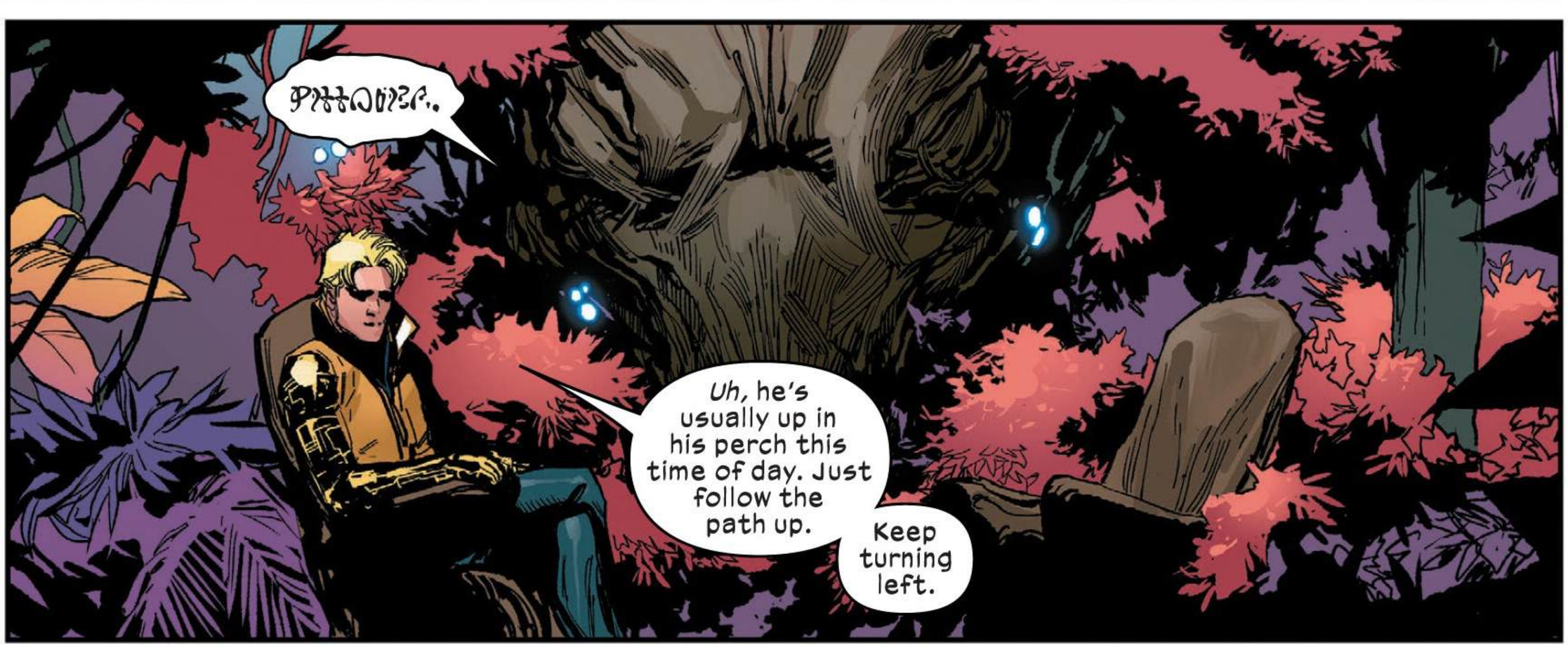
That's a great idea.

*Krakoa.*

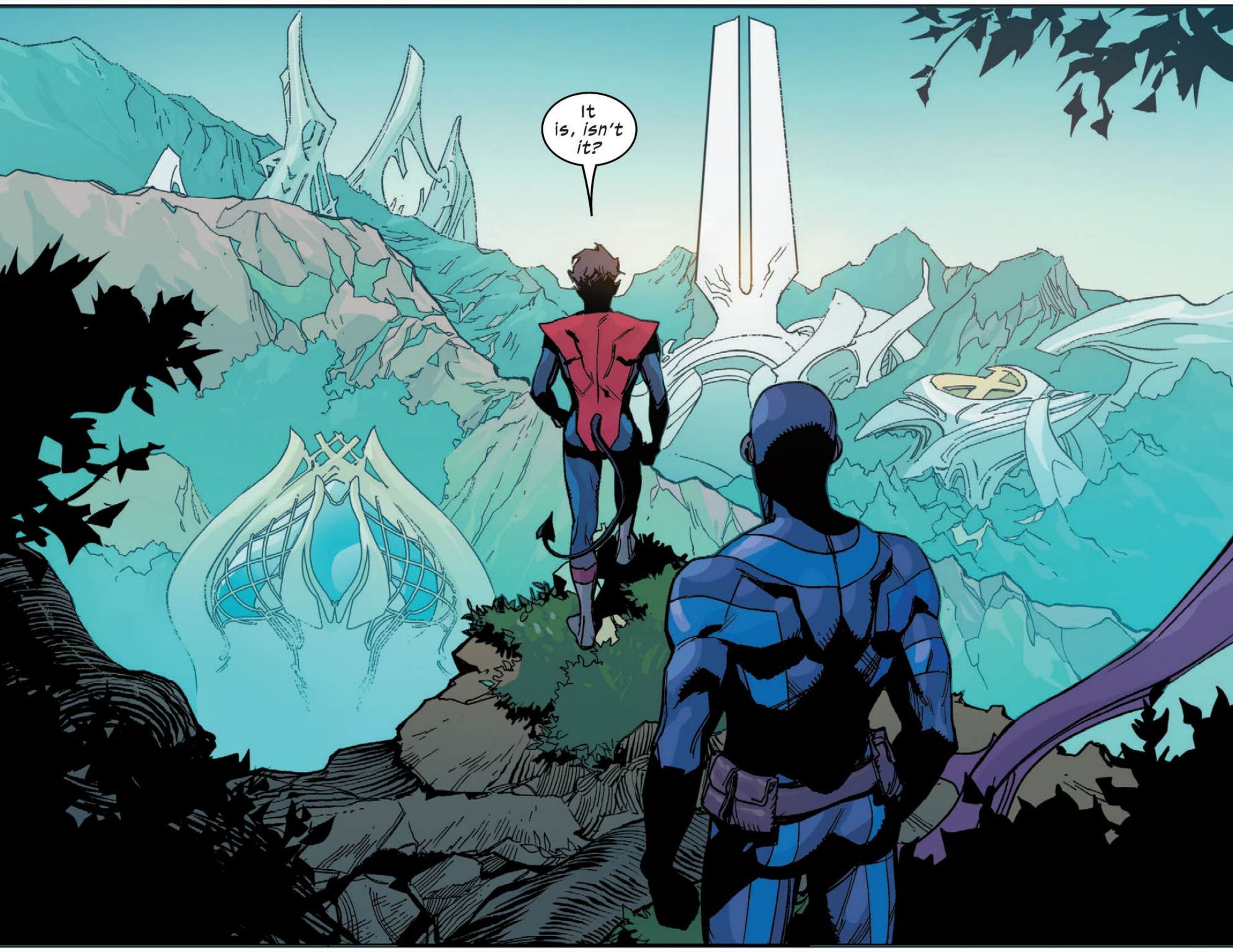
Hello, Douglas.

...
Hi.

Did I... did I just... I guess not.
Seen Kurt around?

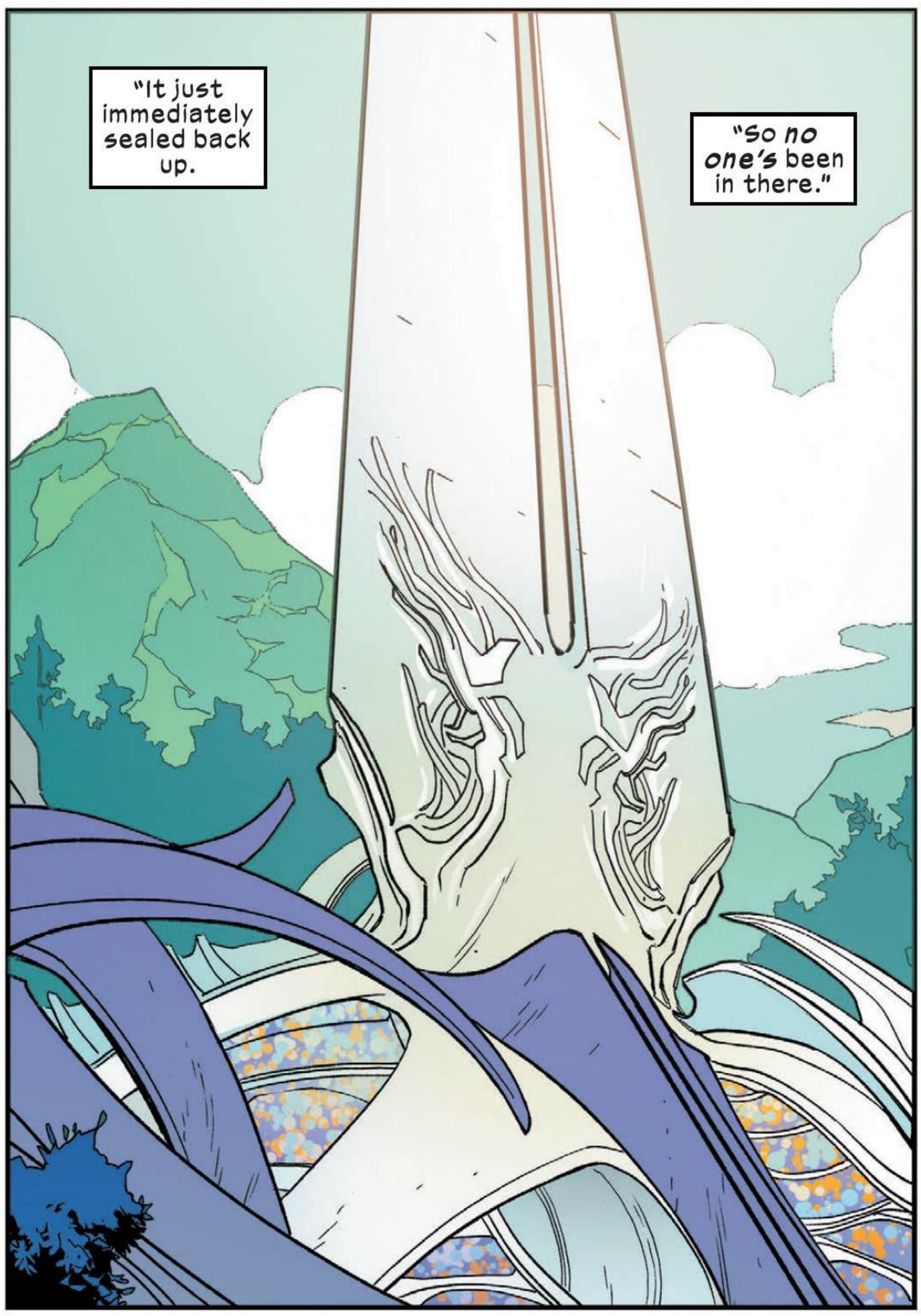

Uh, he's usually up in his perch this time of day. Just follow the path up.
Keep turning left.

That's some view.


It is, isn't it?

You see that building in the distance? The tall one-- the forked towers?
Hard to miss.

What's really interesting about it is that even though we know it's hollow, there's no way *inside.* Logan told me someone tried to cut their way in--
It was him.
It was him.
Yeah. *Of course.* Anyway, he couldn't get in...


"It just immediately sealed back up.
"So *no one's* been in there."

*I have.*

*Is that so?*
*Yes.* Curiosity got the best of me. So in I went. Leap of faith and all that.
*Well?* What did you find?

"*I'm not sure.* When I was younger--*if I were designing a place to live that was everything I wanted*--that building would have been it. I would have called it ***home,*** *I think.*

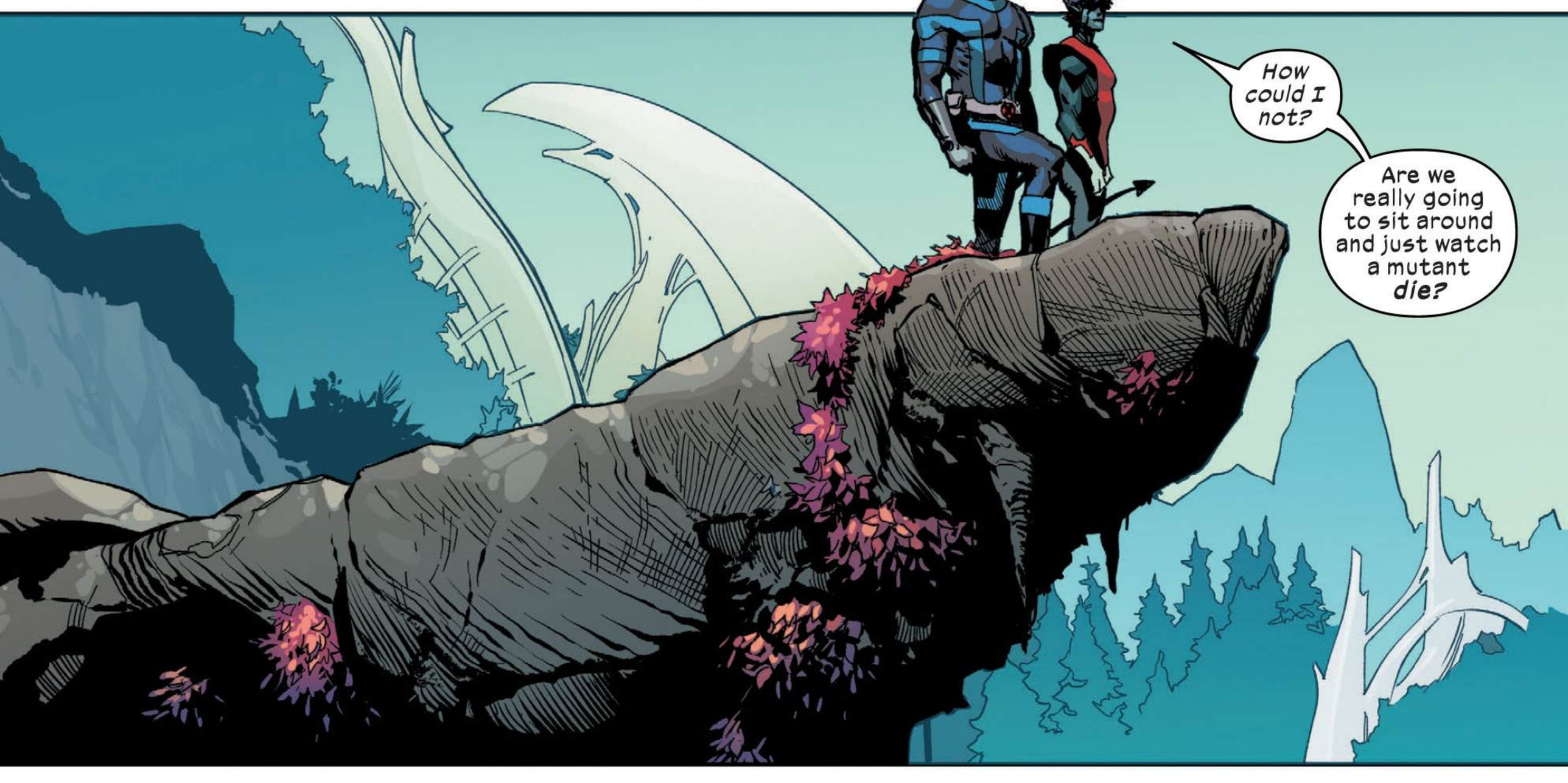
"It's perfect, Scott. Like everything ***here.*** Like ***the island*** made ***it*** just for me."

Crucible is today.

Which is exactly why I came to see you.

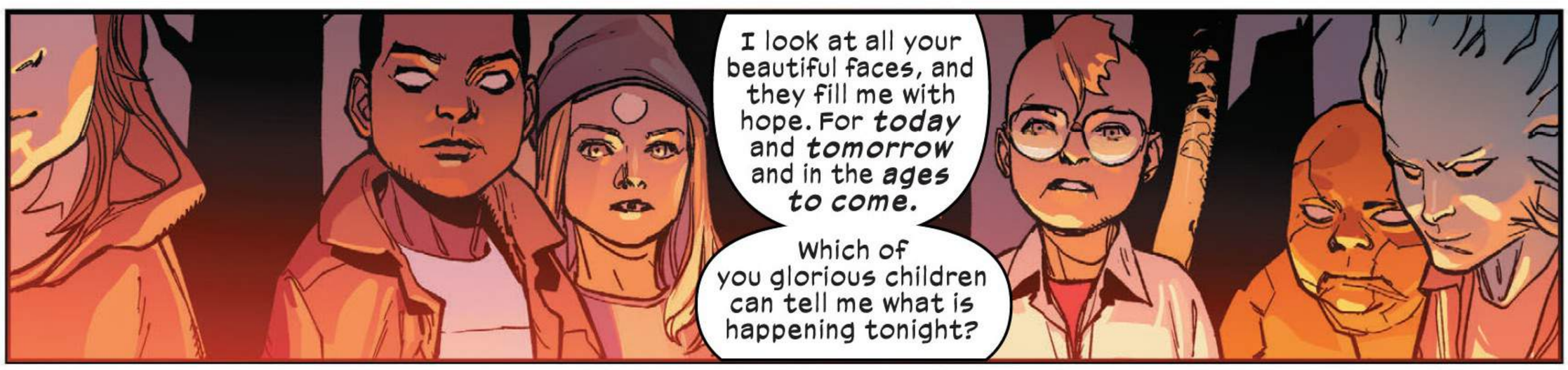
You're struggling with it?

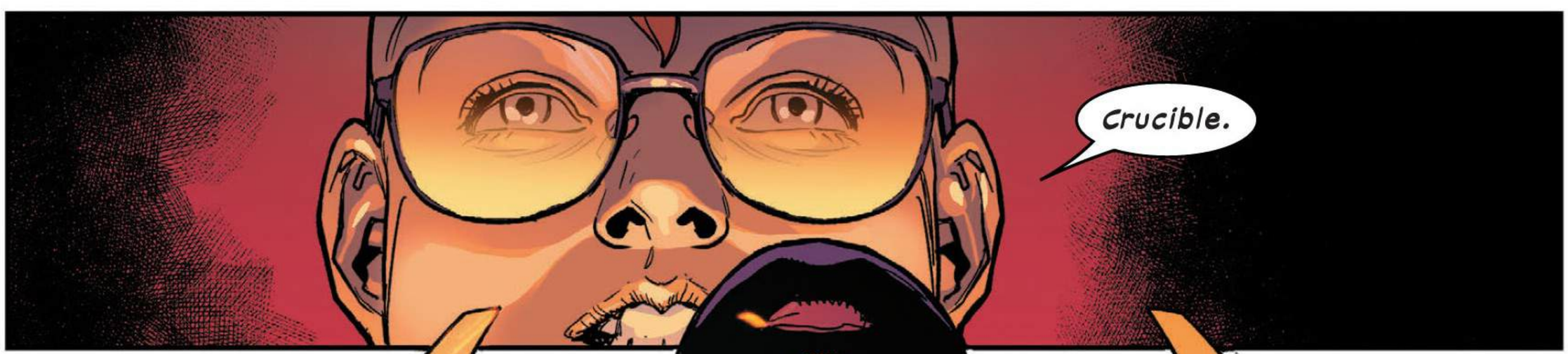
Yes.
Aren't you?


How could I not?
Are we really going to sit around and just watch a mutant *die?*

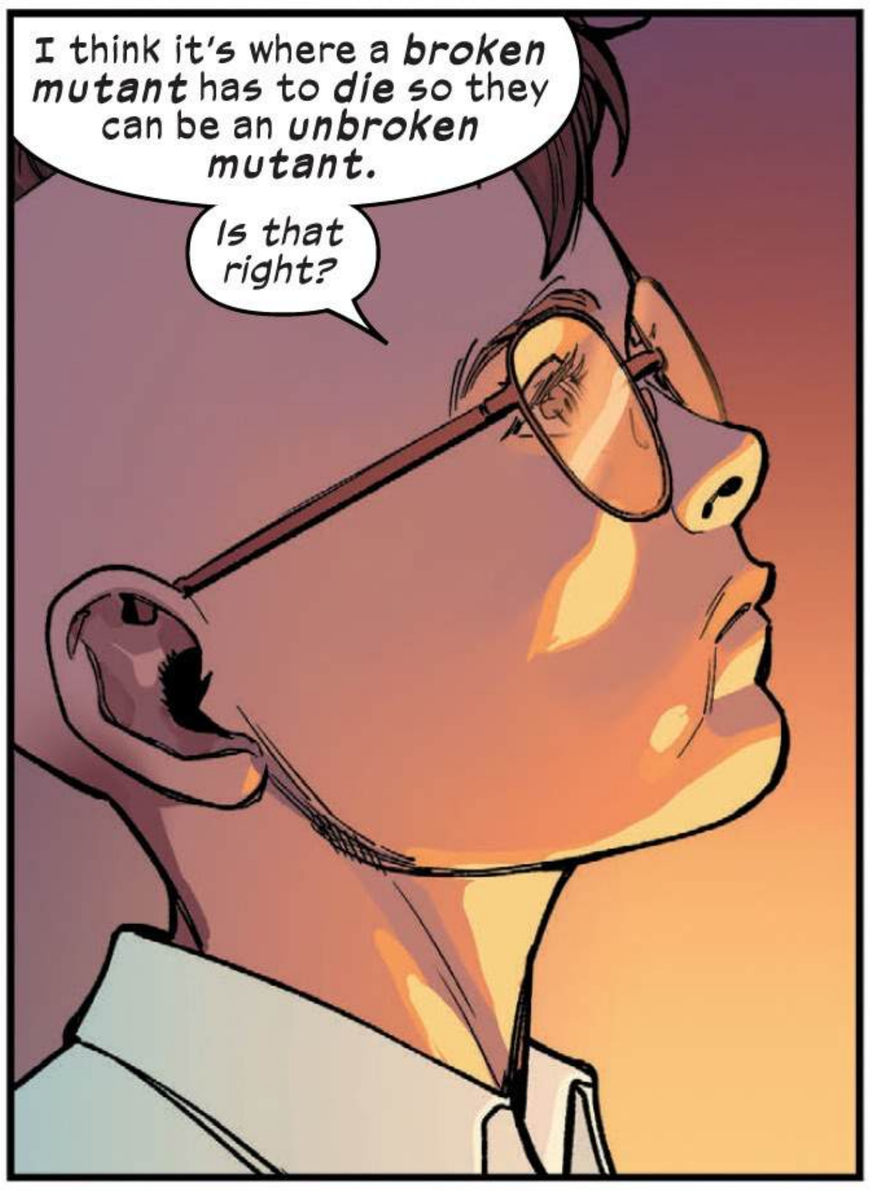
Later.

Great things are happening all around you, children. Great and wonderful things that lift us mutants up.
And you might wonder...how high, Exodus? How high? Well, now we know: higher than ever believed possible.


I look at all your beautiful faces, and they fill me with hope. For today and tomorrow and in the ages to come.
Which of you glorious children can tell me what is happening tonight?

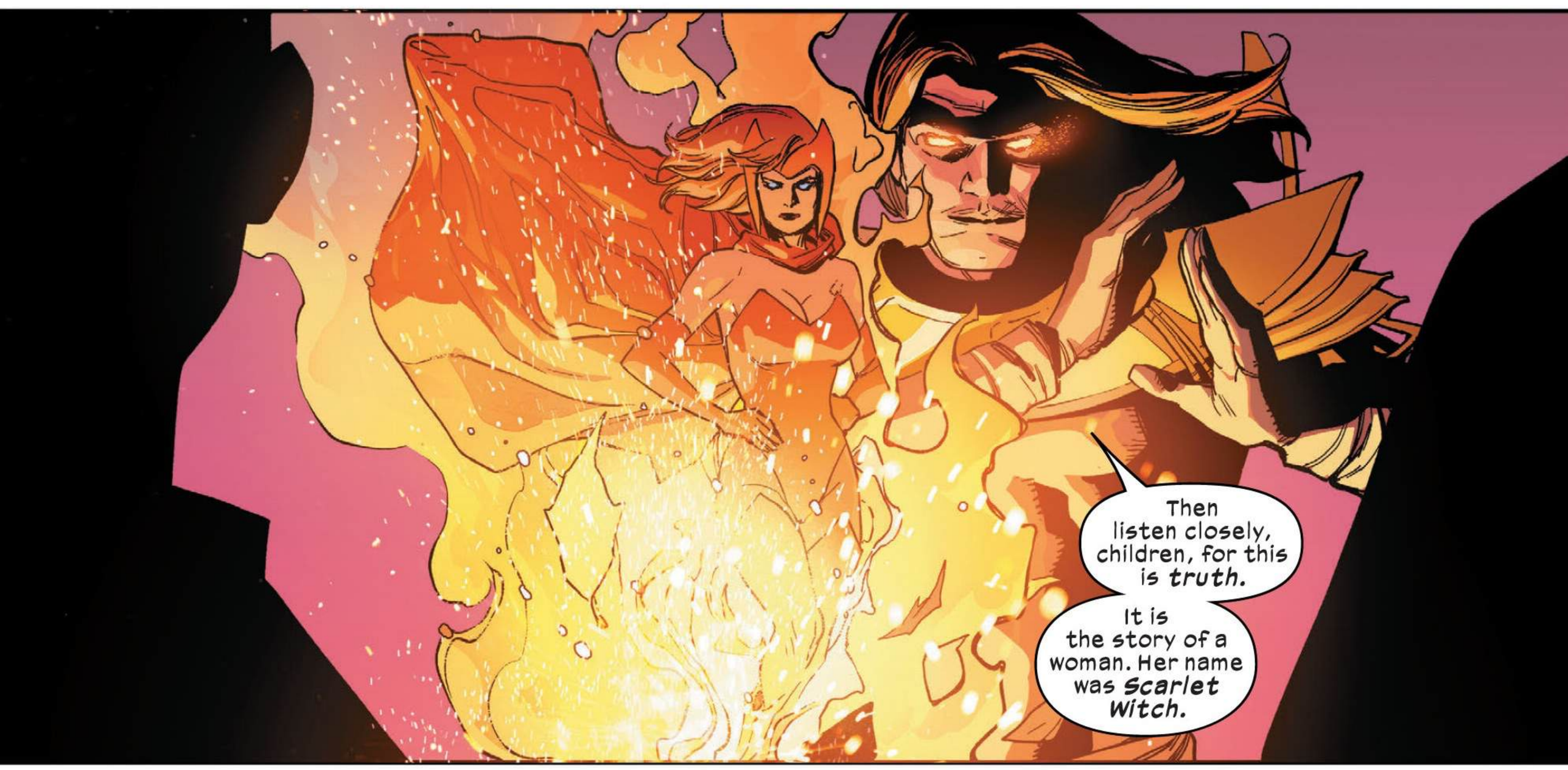

Crucible.

Our first Crucible.
Which is what we named this glorious thing-- but can you tell me what Crucible actually is?


I think it's where a broken mutant has to die so they can be an unbroken mutant.
Is that right?

Your answer has the ring of truth...but not the whole truth.
Would you like to hear the whole truth?

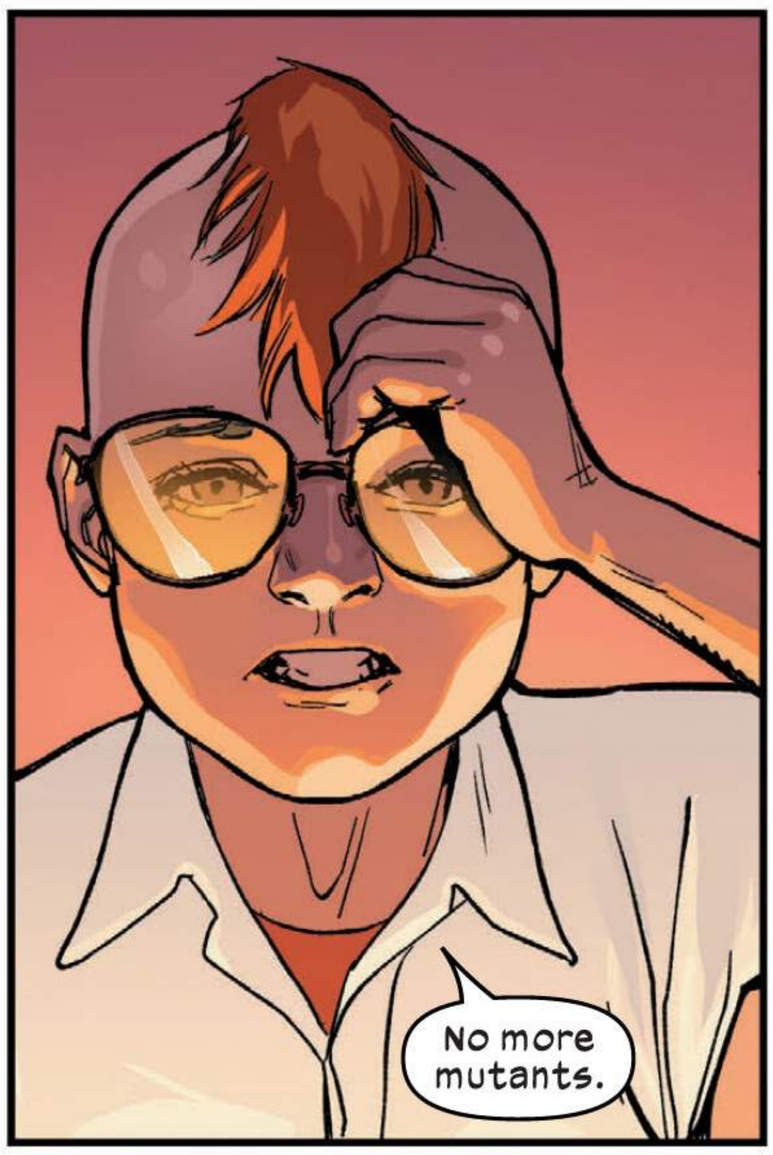
I think so. Yes.

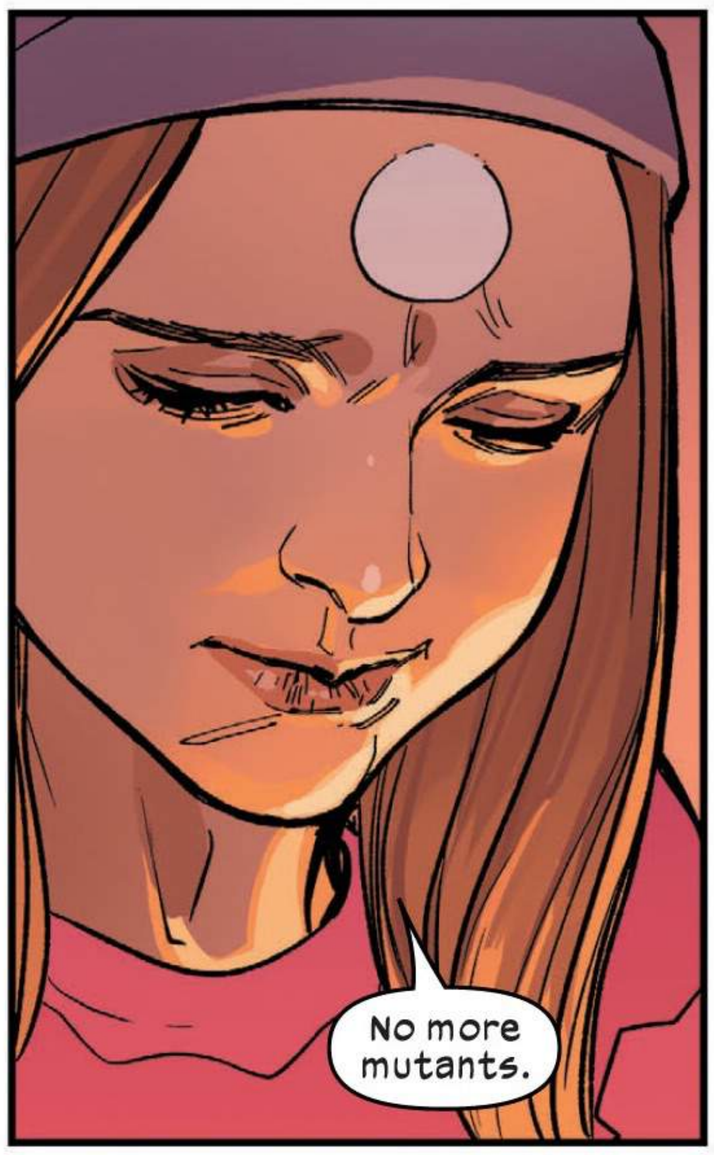

Then listen closely, children, for this is truth.
It is the story of a woman. Her name was Scarlet Witch.

Pretender! Pretender!
Stop! Stop! We don't say her name!
Pretender! Pretender!

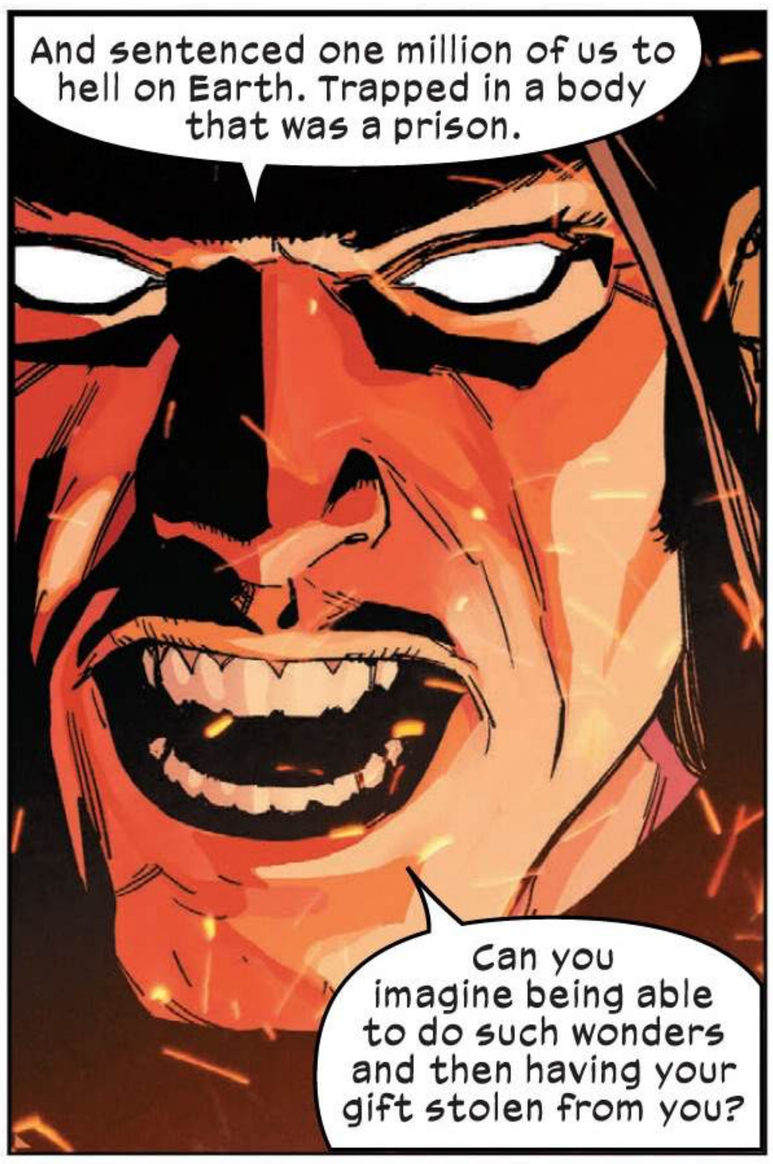
Of course you know her--we all know her--her and her great sin.
She erased the powers of one million mutants. She made mutant into man...

"She made so many of us less. She spoke the words..."


No more mutants.


No more mutants.

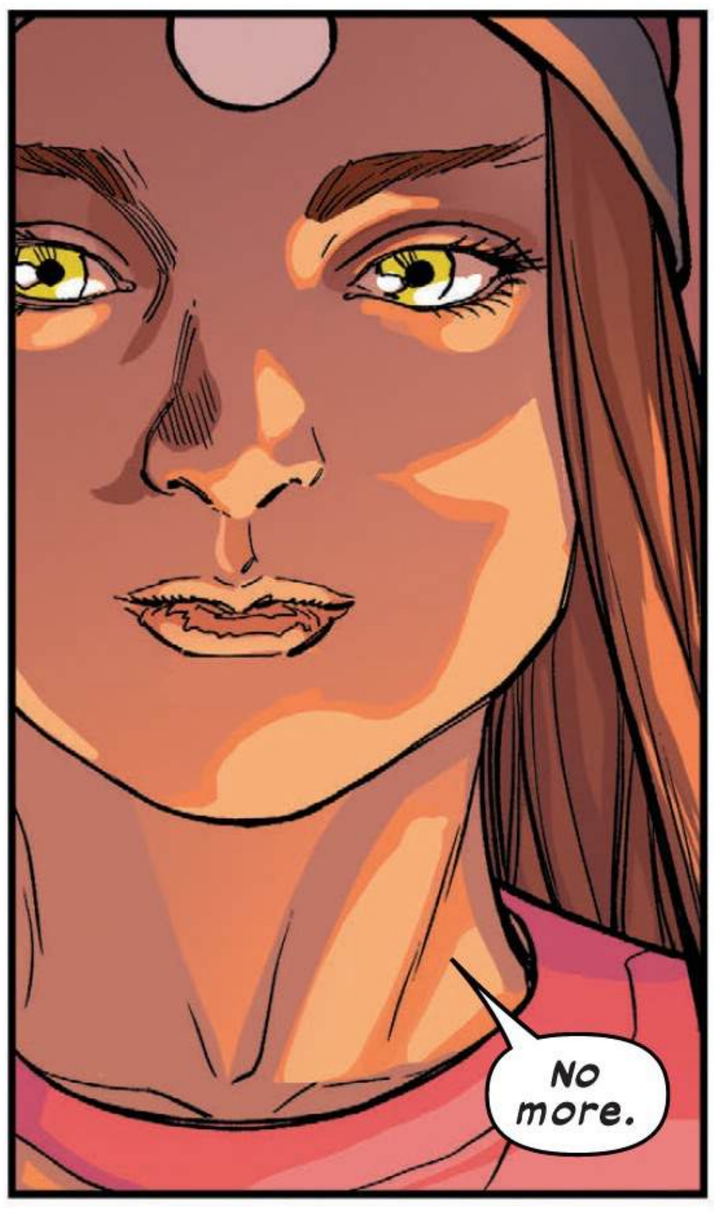
No more mutants.


And sentenced one million of us to hell on Earth. Trapped in a body that was a prison.
Can you imagine being able to do such wonders and then having your gift stolen from you?

*And why?* Because she thought it was the right thing to do?
Because she knew ***what was best?***

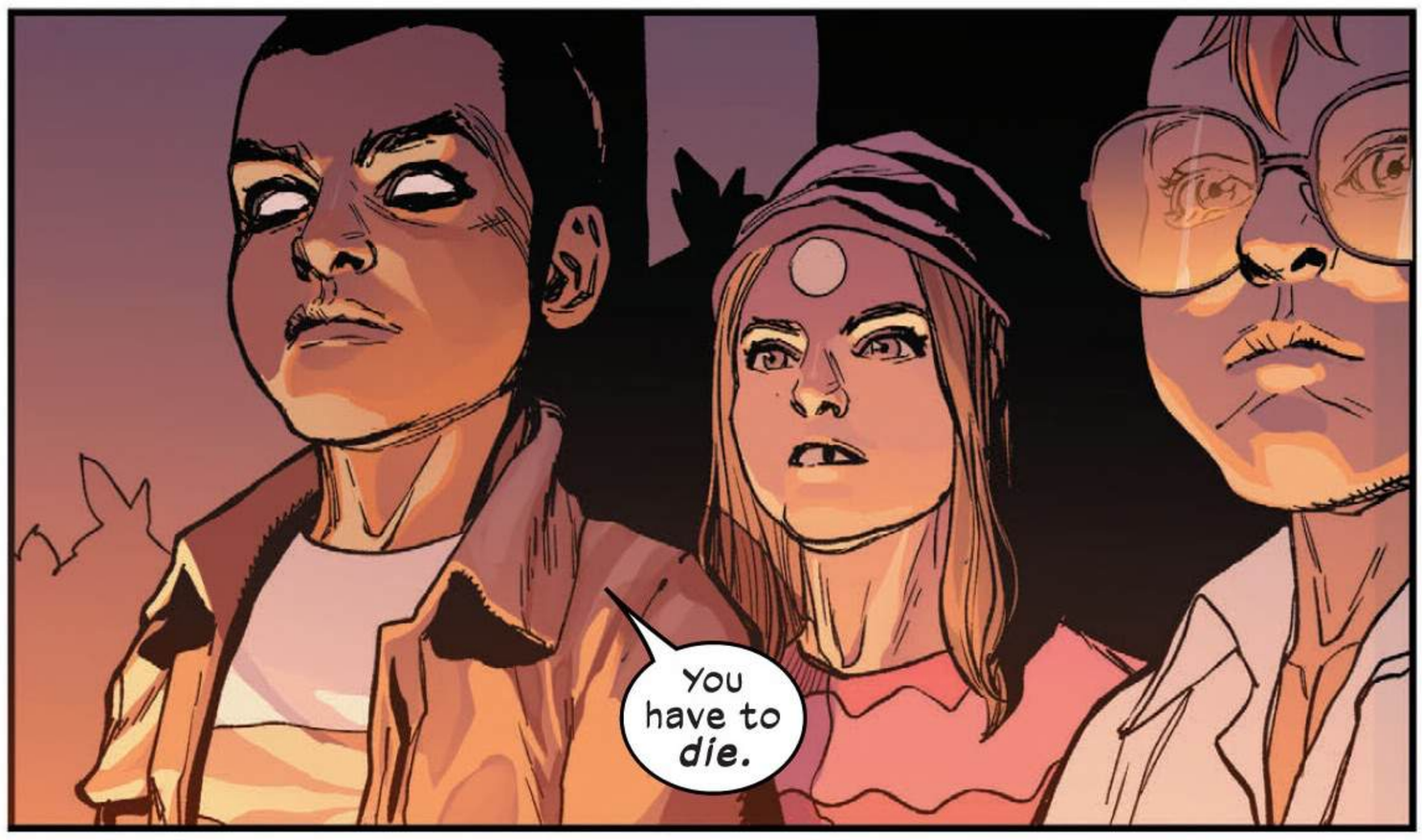
That's what ***they*** do--*the worst of them*--they decide what's right for all of us. *How to talk, how to think, what to believe...*
But what do we say to ***them?*** What do we say to ***her?***

***No more.***


***No more.***

***No more.***

The great gift of the Five means that any of us can be reborn--that we can be made whole.
All that's required is one thing. And what is that, children?

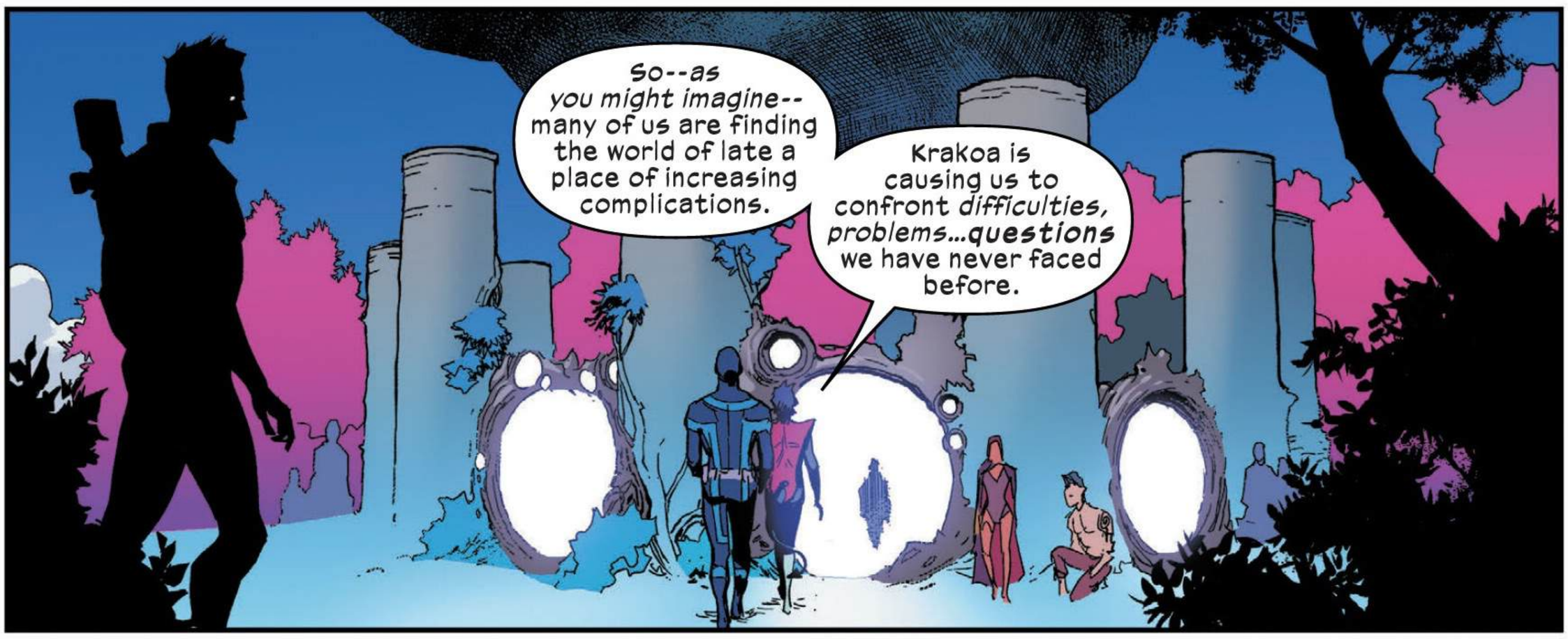

You have to *die.*

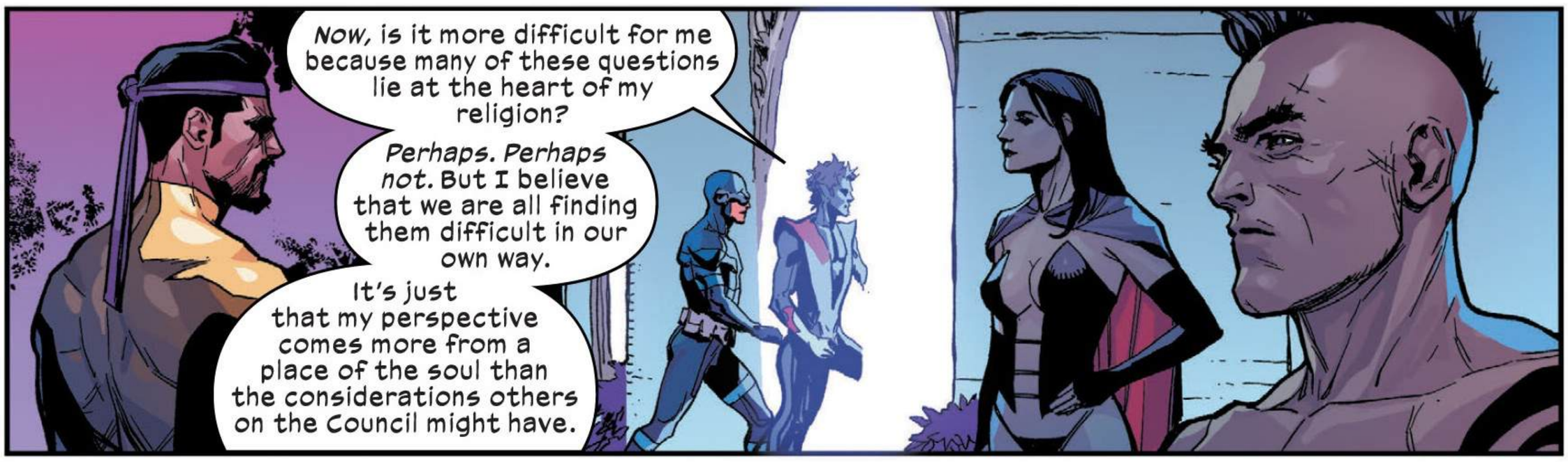
*That's right...*

"...but not just *any death.*"
*So...*how did you come up with the rules for mutants who have lost their powers?
*Jean didn't tell you?*

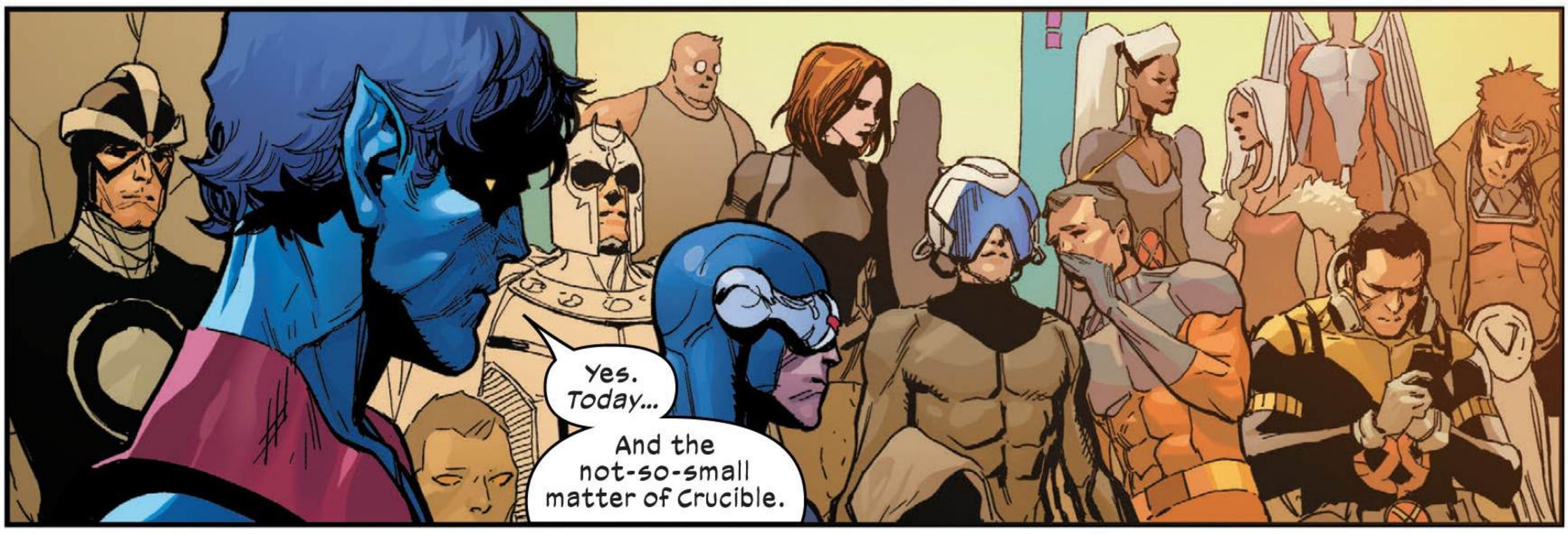
We've both been so busy, and I keep forgetting to ask.
*And Emma?*

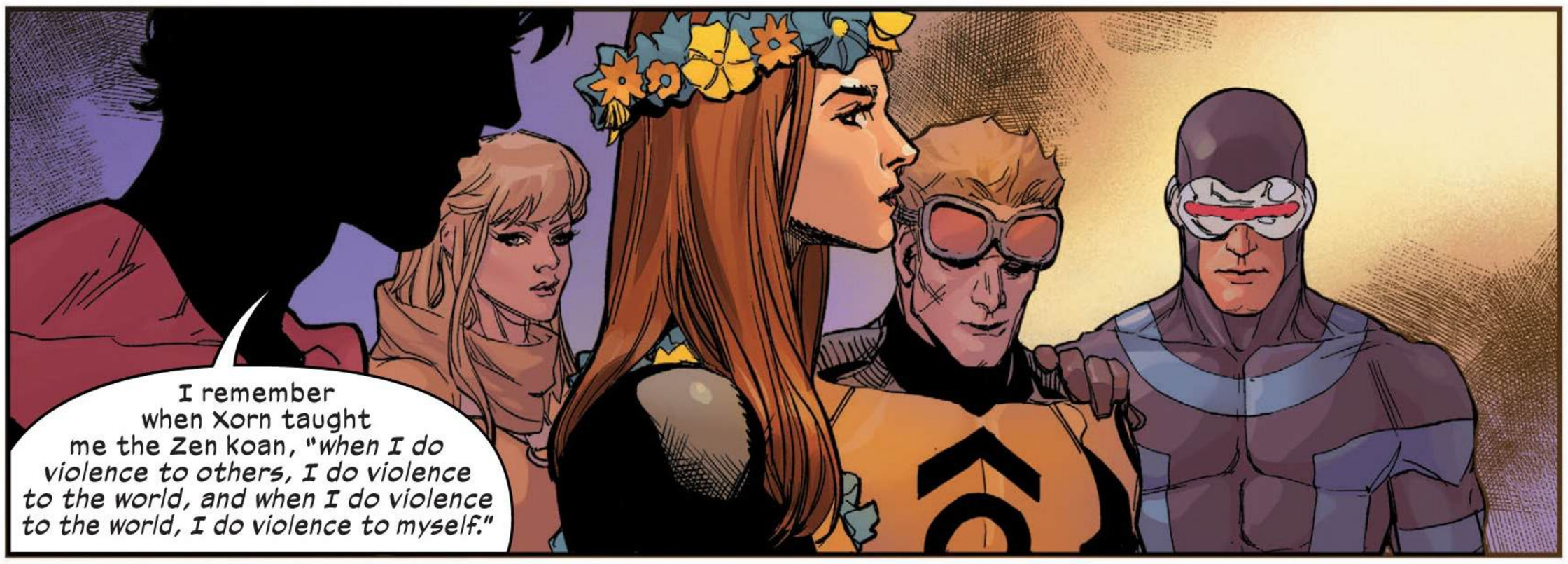
I'm afraid to ask her because of what the answer might be.
You're a wiser man than most, my friend.

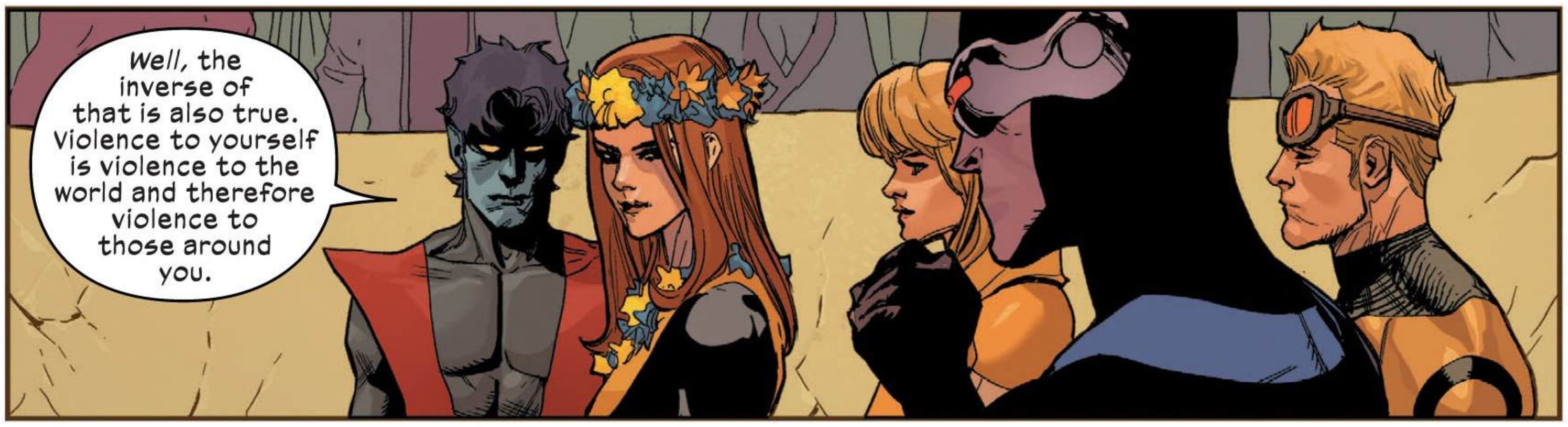

So--as you might imagine--many of us are finding the world of late a place of increasing complications.
Krakoa is causing us to confront difficulties, problems...questions we have never faced before.


Now, is it more difficult for me because many of these questions lie at the heart of my religion?
Perhaps. Perhaps not. But I believe that we are all finding them difficult in our own way.
It's just that my perspective comes more from a place of the soul than the considerations others on the Council might have.

Like today, for example?


Yes. Today...
And the not-so-small matter of Crucible.




For me, these acts have both an external and eternal cost, and--*to leave the Buddhism behind and return to the bosom of Christ's church*--why they are sins.

*Of course,* my perspective--*impassioned as it was*--lacked the pragmatic strength of some other arguments.

*After all,* if one million depowered mutants decided to kill themselves tomorrow so they could be reborn in mutant glory, *well...*

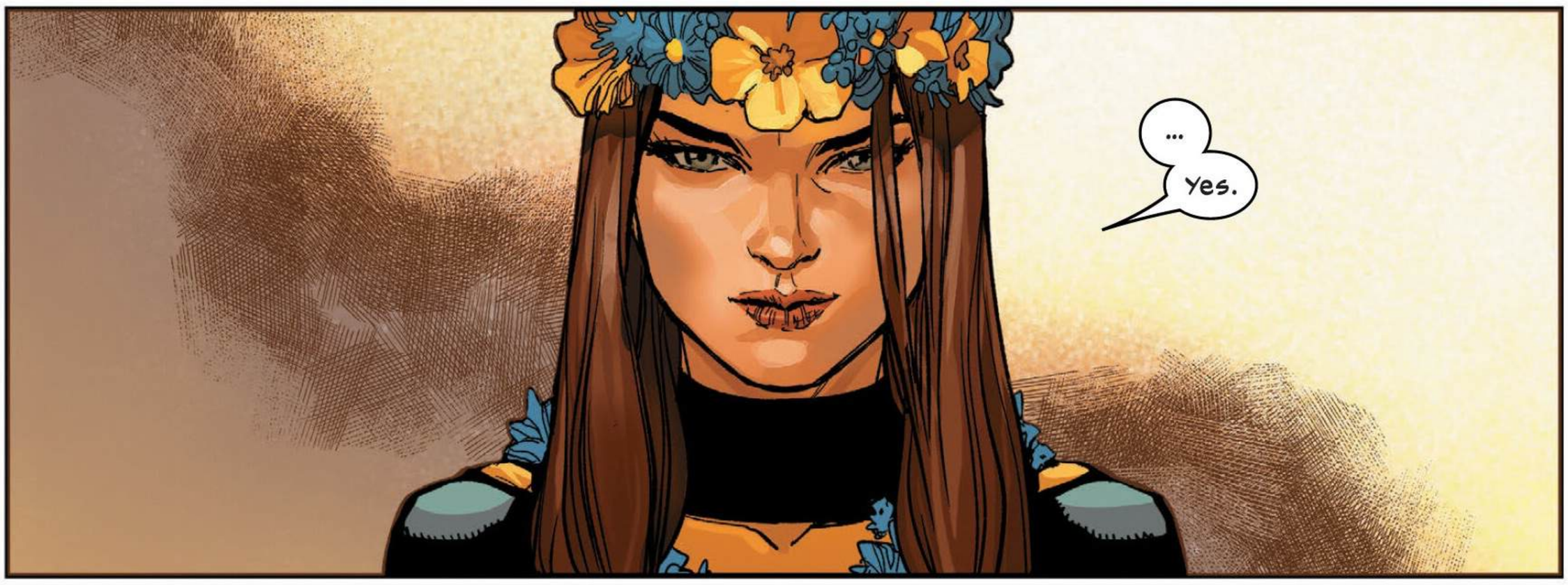
...that represents a very real and practical problem for the Five.

"...there was another argument made."

***Humans.*** What can we say about humans that they have not already said about themselves?

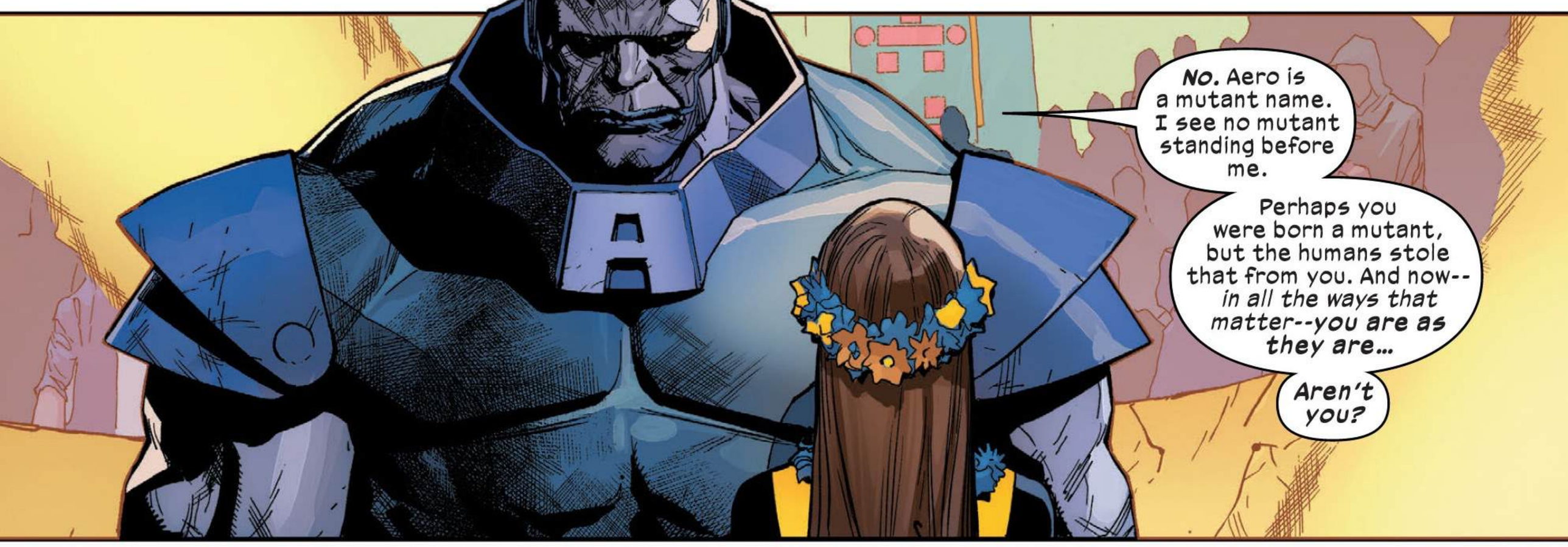
They cover the truth with lies, but their actions--*their godforsaken actions*--always reveal who they really are.

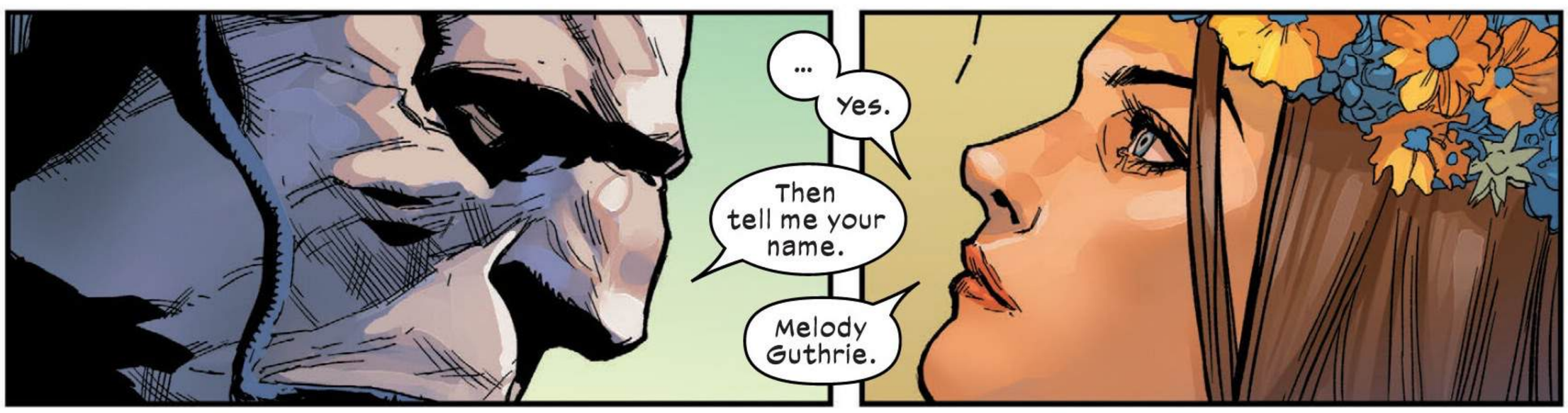
Oh, how they ***hate us.*** Oh, how they ***fear us.*** Oh, how they ***envy us.***



What's your name?

Aero.

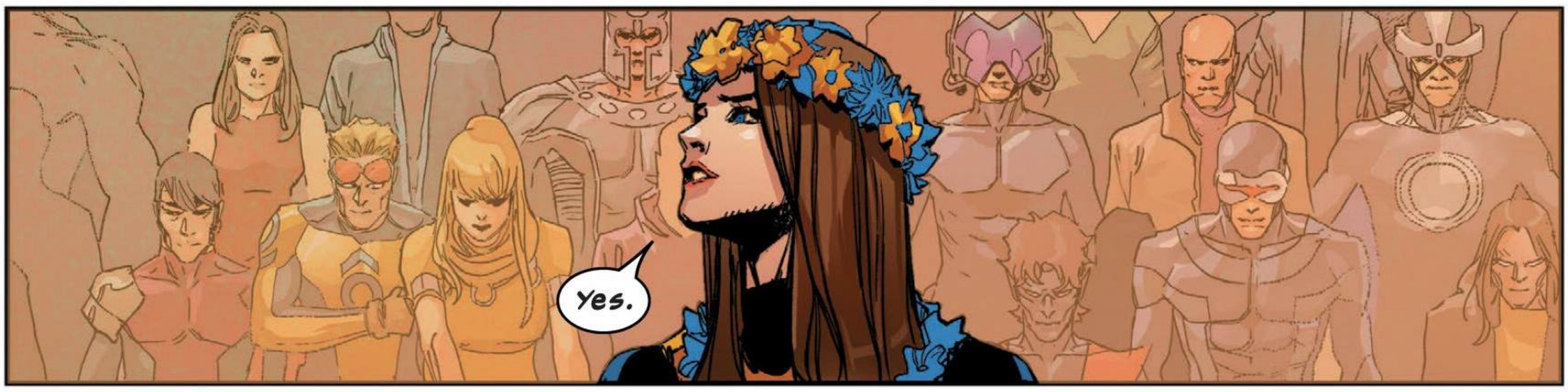

No. Aero is a mutant name. I see no mutant standing before me.
Perhaps you were born a mutant, but the humans stole that from you. And now--in all the ways that matter--you are as they are...
Aren't you?


...
Yes.
Then tell me your name.
Melody Guthrie.

Guthrie. A powerful mutant family. A great name.
What a disappointment you must be.

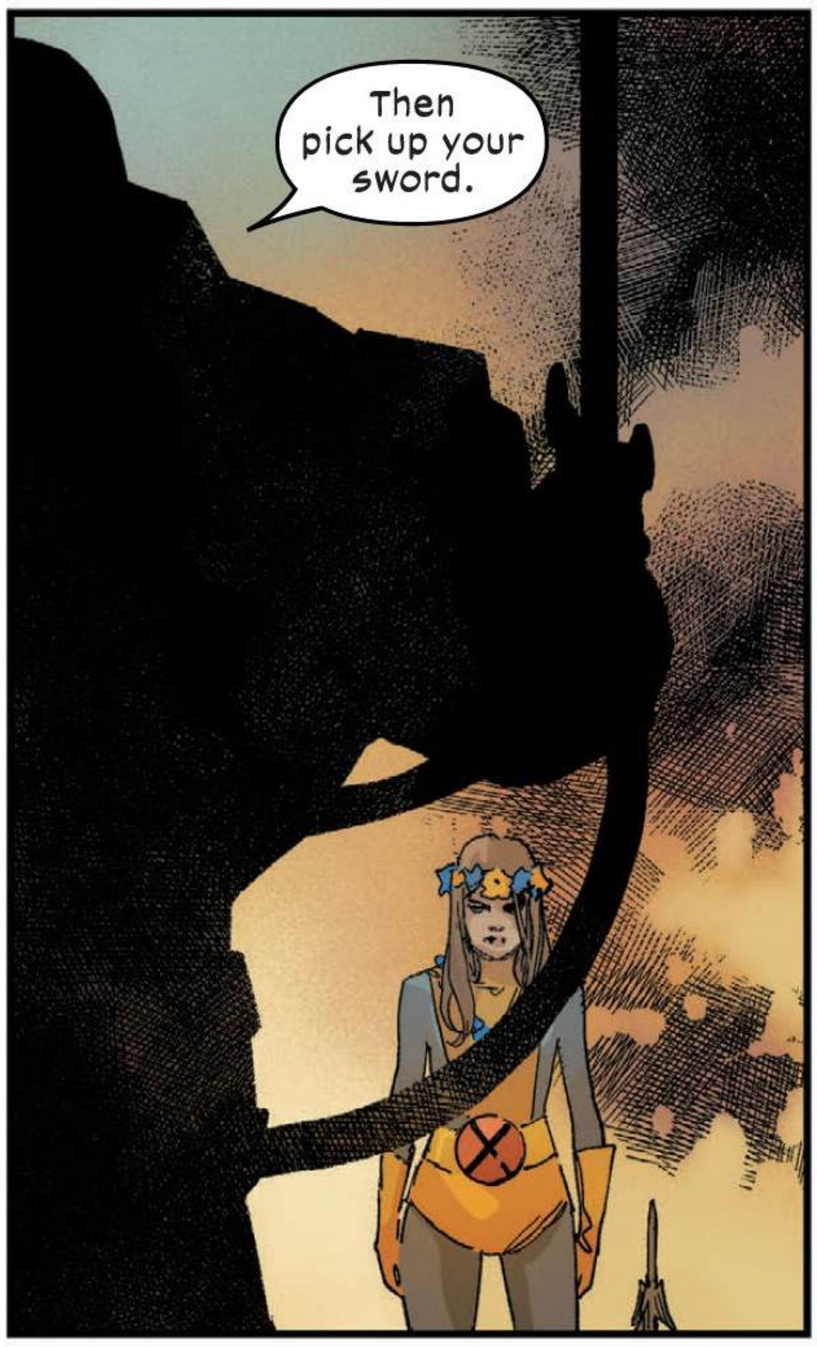
This is too much. I'm gonna knock his--
No. Wait. Give it a minute.
This is what she wants.

Can you stand the disappointment?
Can you abide what they did to you?
NO.
Look around you. *Look closely.* These are a people willing to fight to the very last one to preserve our way of life.
To fight and die for one another. And this is why we do not accept those like you simply killing yourself to be reborn as something better.
It's a ***surrender.*** And those days are beyond our people. *Do you understand?*


Yes.

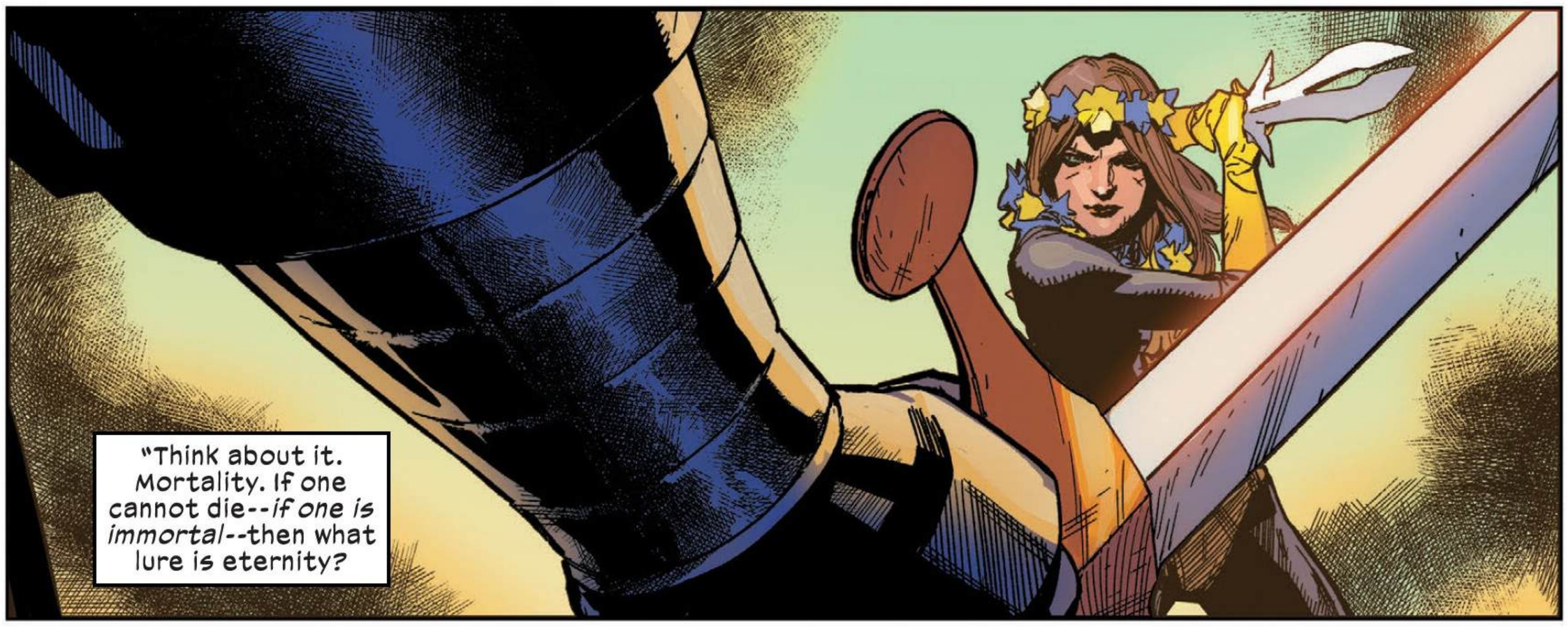
So what do you want, Melody Guthrie?
*Why are you here?*

To fight and die for my people.
Like a mutant.


Then pick up your sword.

"The problem with all of this, Scott--*all of it*--is that it feels a little... reckless. *Doesn't it?*
"It's true, we have laws and the foundation of some kind of government. But what was it built on? *Hope? Anger? Inevitability? Arrogance?*
"What's at the ***real center*** of it?"
I take it you have some opinions.
That's the thing, my friend. *I really don't.*
All I have are ***more questions...***
"*Consider my faith.* I can't help but wonder what happens to our souls when we die?

"Do they linger waiting for eternity, or do they return to their mortal vessel when that vessel is reborn, as you and I recently were?"

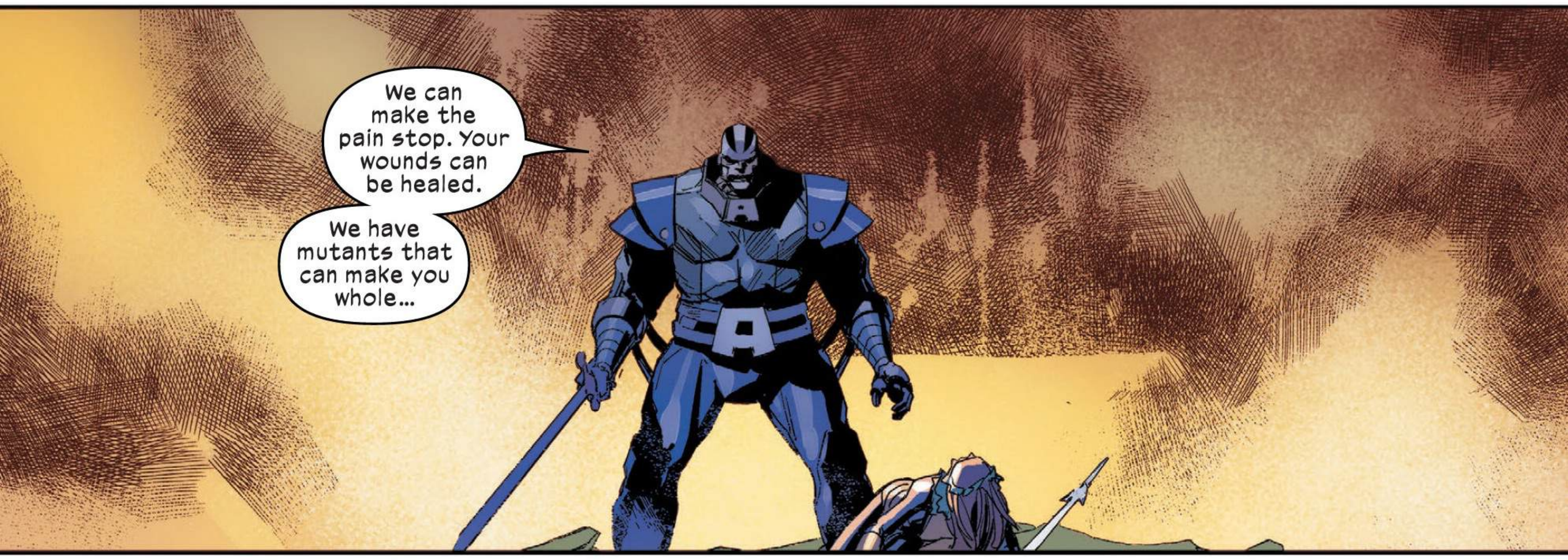


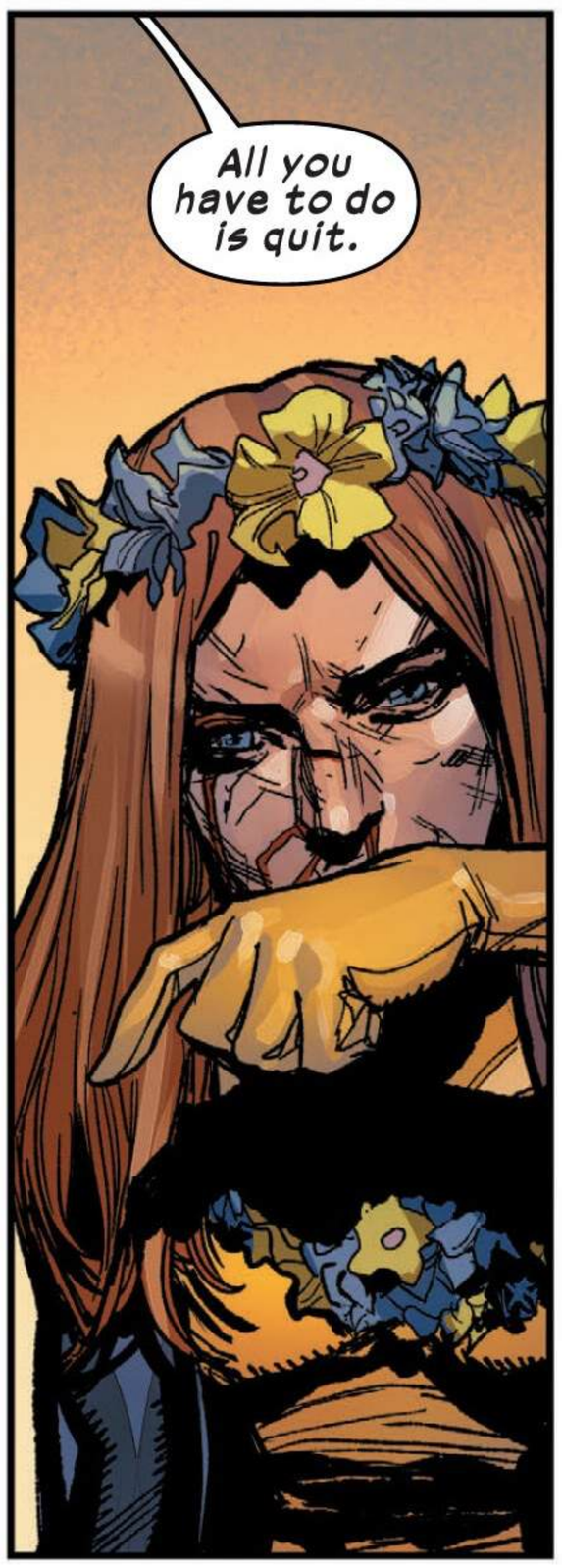
"Why seek heaven if we can--*for all time*--do God's good work here in the living world? Is our true cross ***now*** the burden of creating a heaven on Earth?

"Such questions...I could continue for days, but consider the small cracks already spidering through the foundation of this society we're building..."

"I agree, but some might say it isn't. Especially after witnessing Crucible."

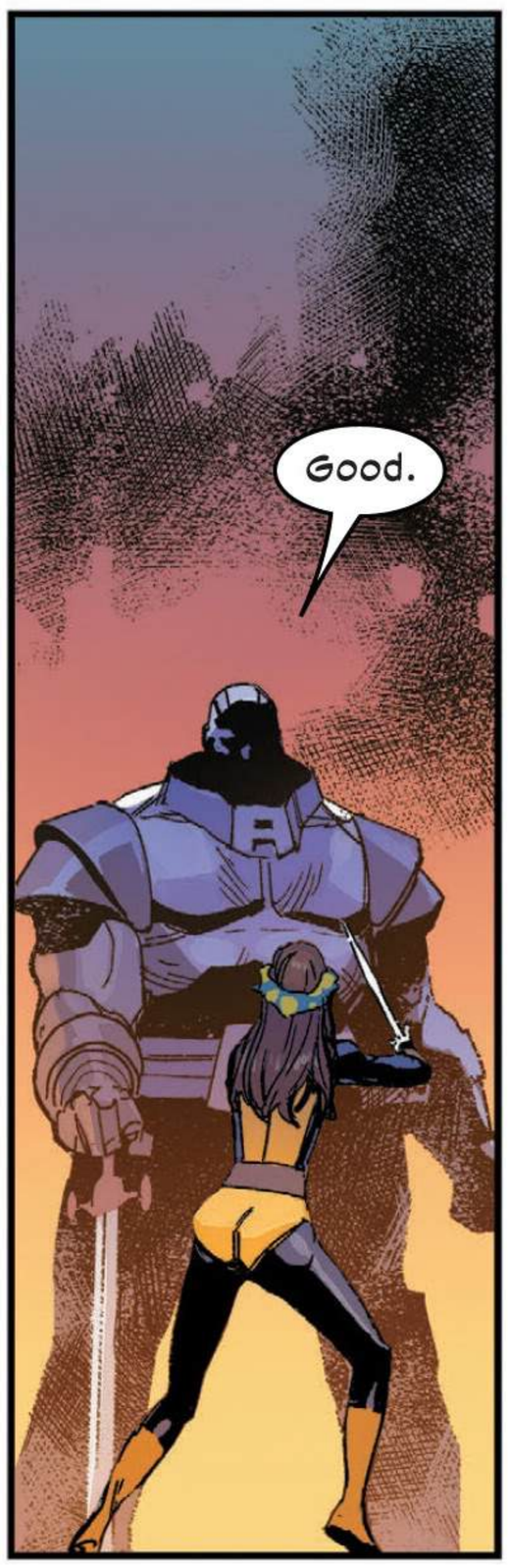
You can live like this. Like a human.
It's an existence of a sort. There's nothing wrong with it.


We can make the pain stop. Your wounds can be healed.
We have mutants that can make you whole...


All you have to do is quit.

Just lie there.
And don't get up.

Go to hell.


Good.

"If one is changed--*made whole*--in being reborn, then why shouldn't ***other mutants*** have the same opportunity in death?

*"Why shouldn't they be able to be the very best version of themselves--or perhaps even a better version?"*

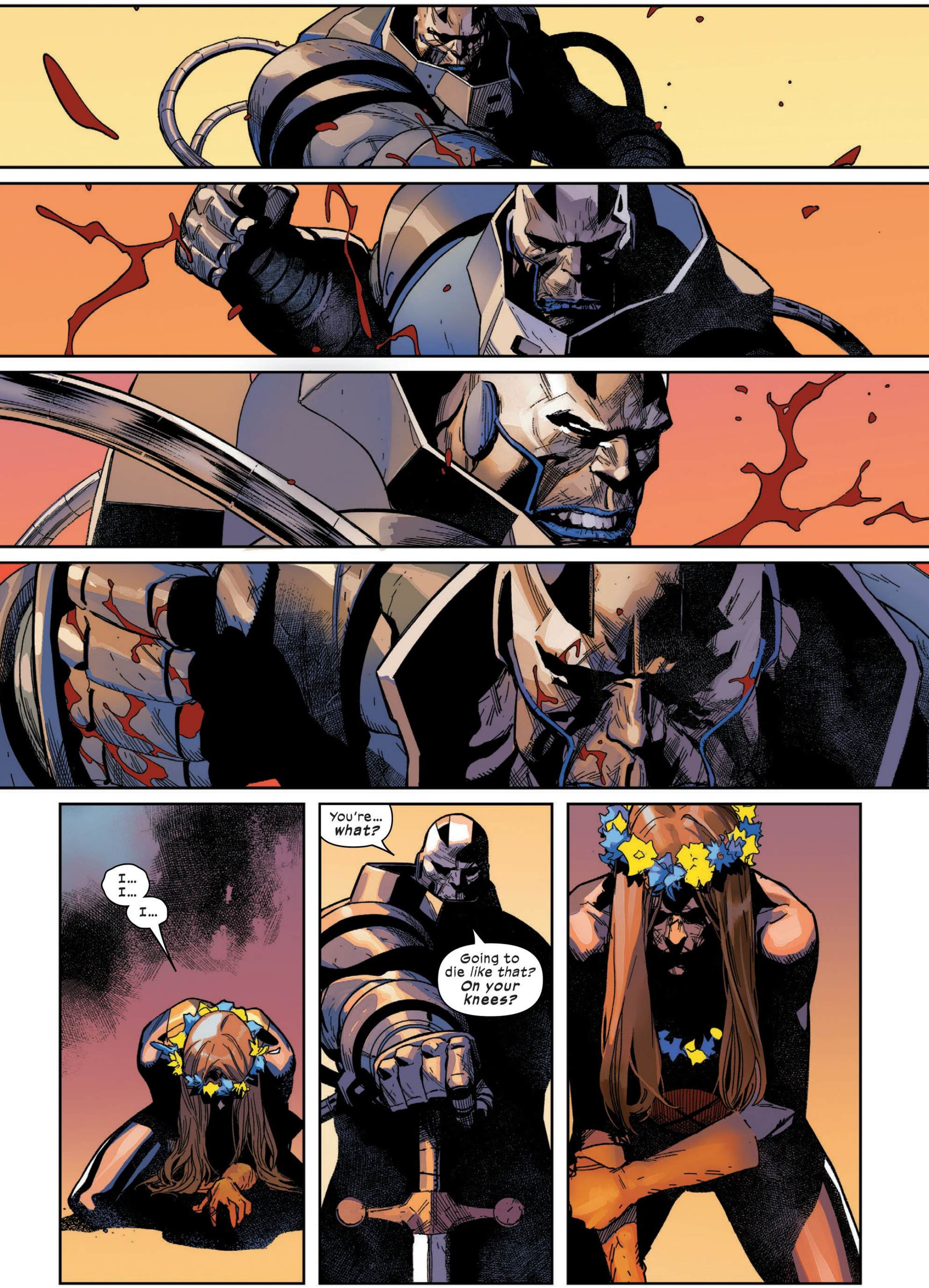
They should, *I think*. The problem is that some are arguing that the best version of themselves would be being reborn in a copy of Magneto's body with his powers.

I've already seen that written in someone's will.

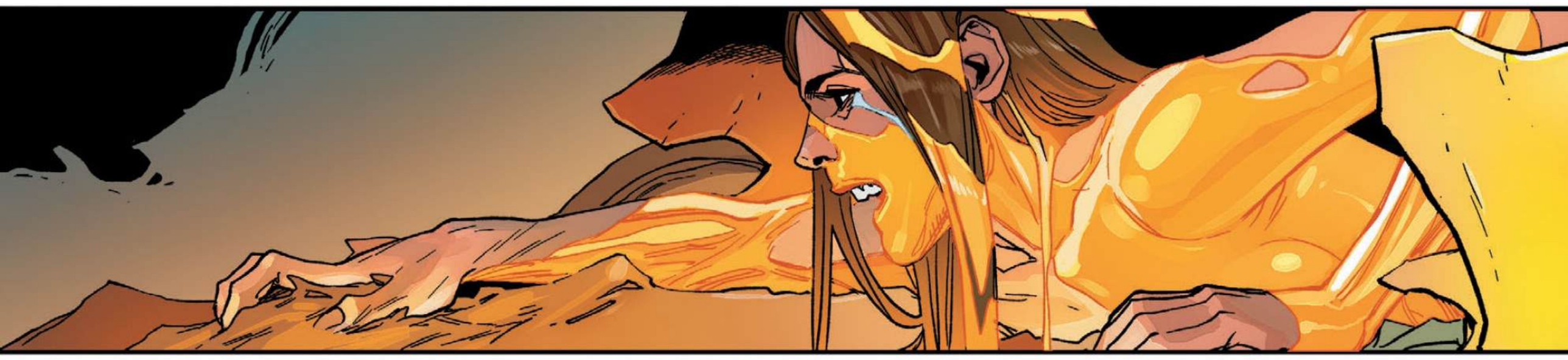
But why stop there? Why not combine two? Why not add a third into the mix?

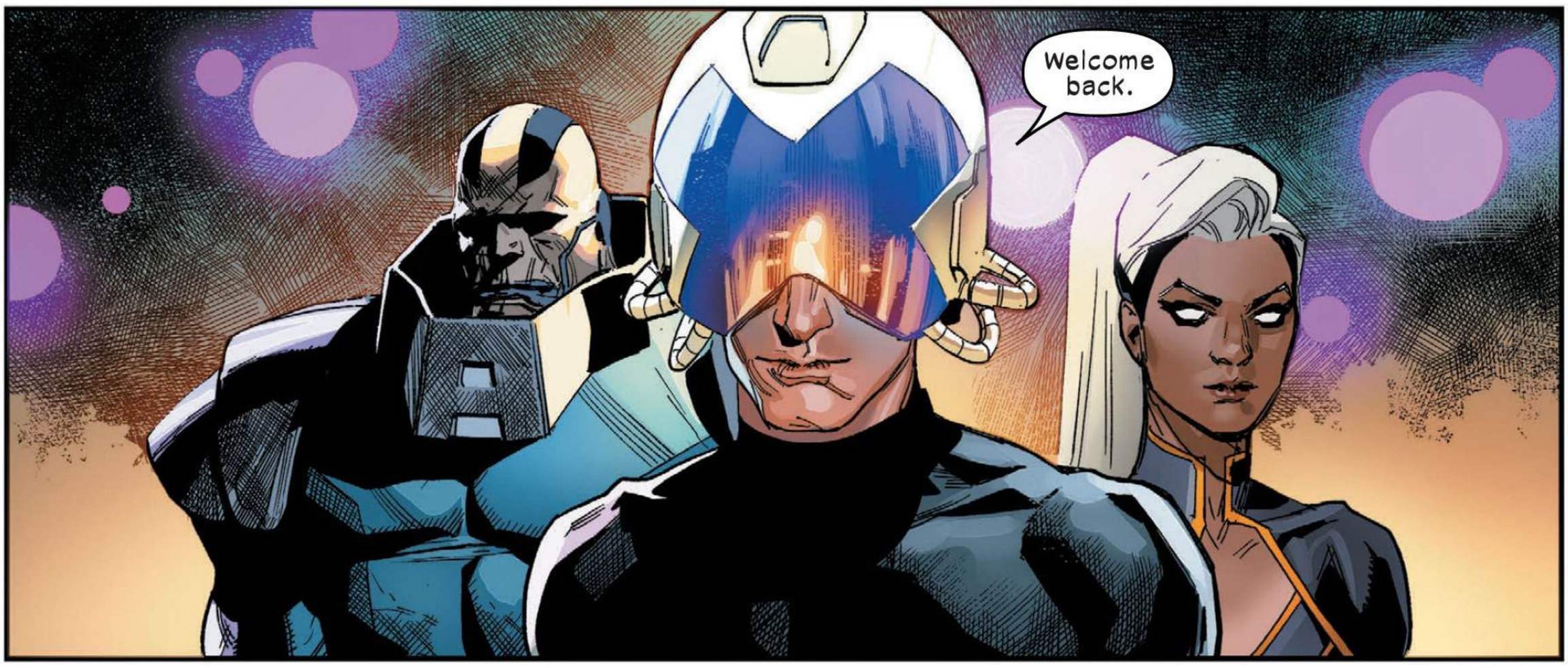
*Yeah.* Like I said...

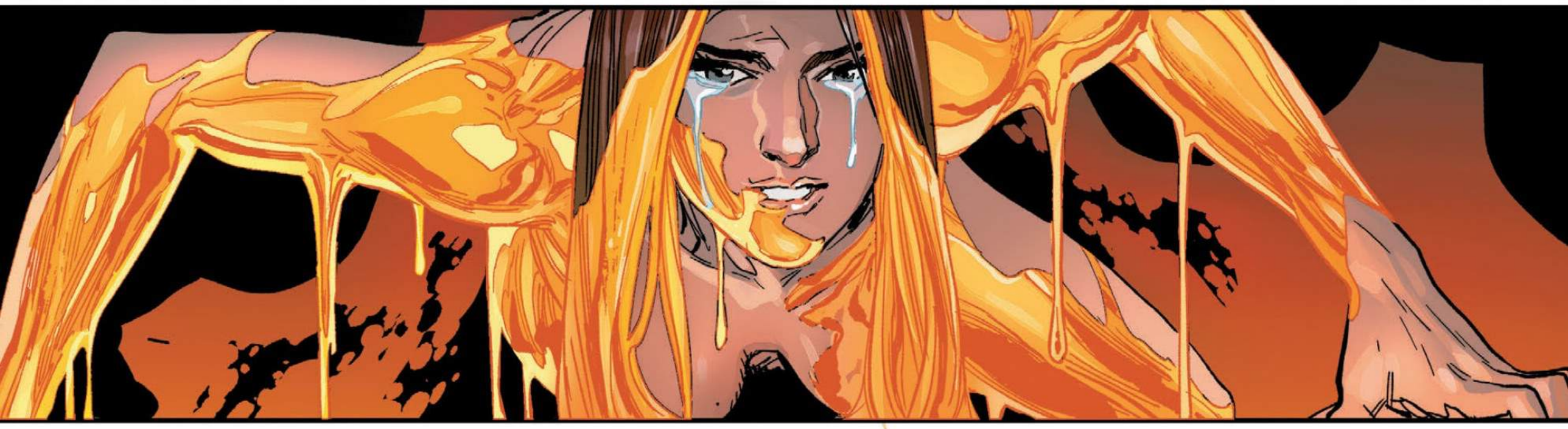
"...it's going to be a problem."

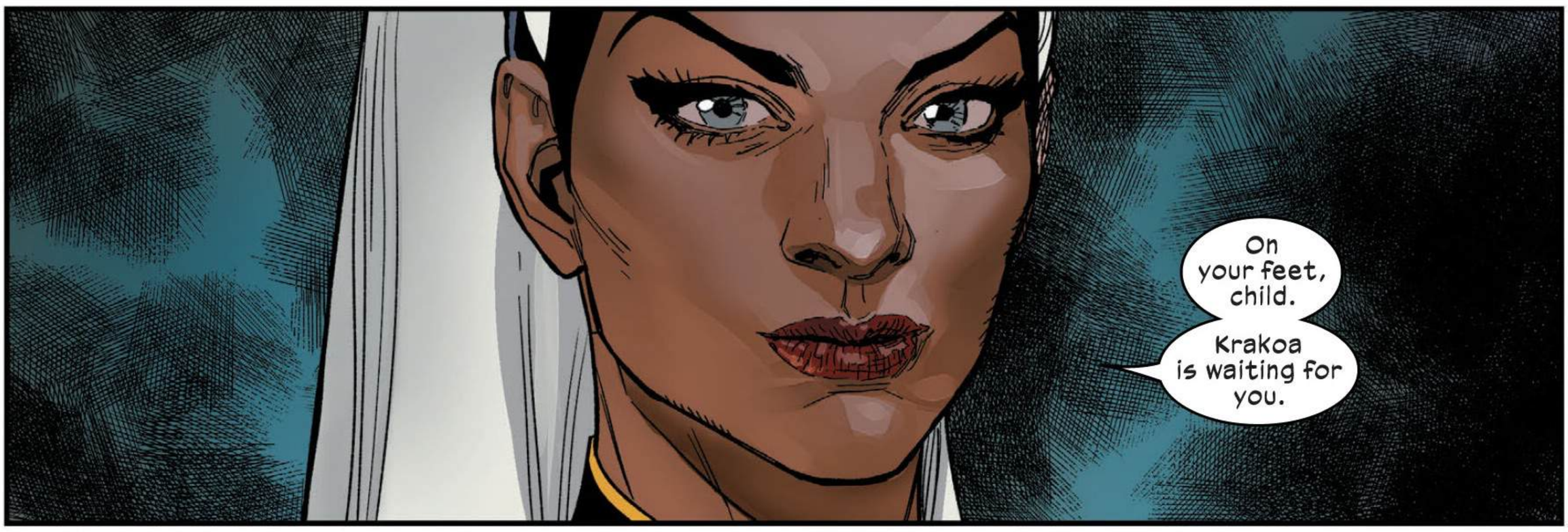

I...
I...
I...
You're... what?
Going to die like that? On your knees?

Never.
...
I see you, sister.
We all do.
Accept this gift.
You have earned it.

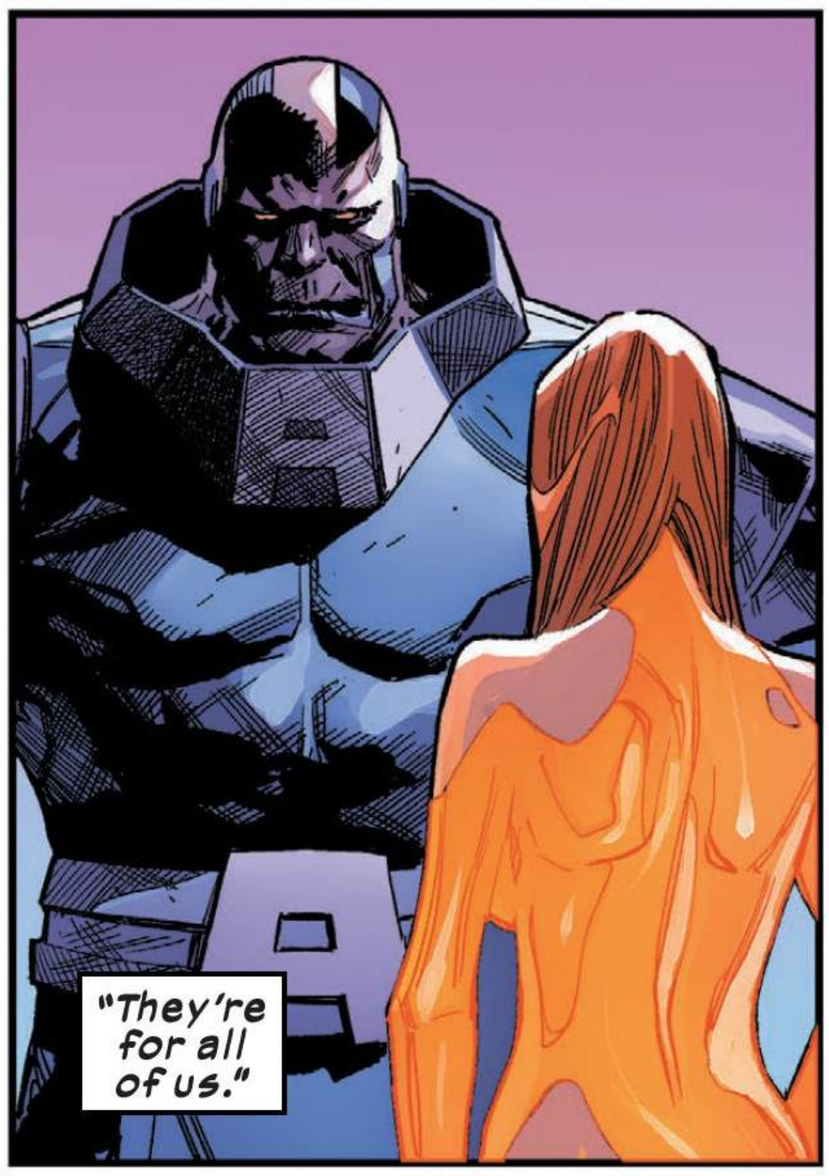



Welcome back.




On your feet, child.
Krakoa is waiting for you.

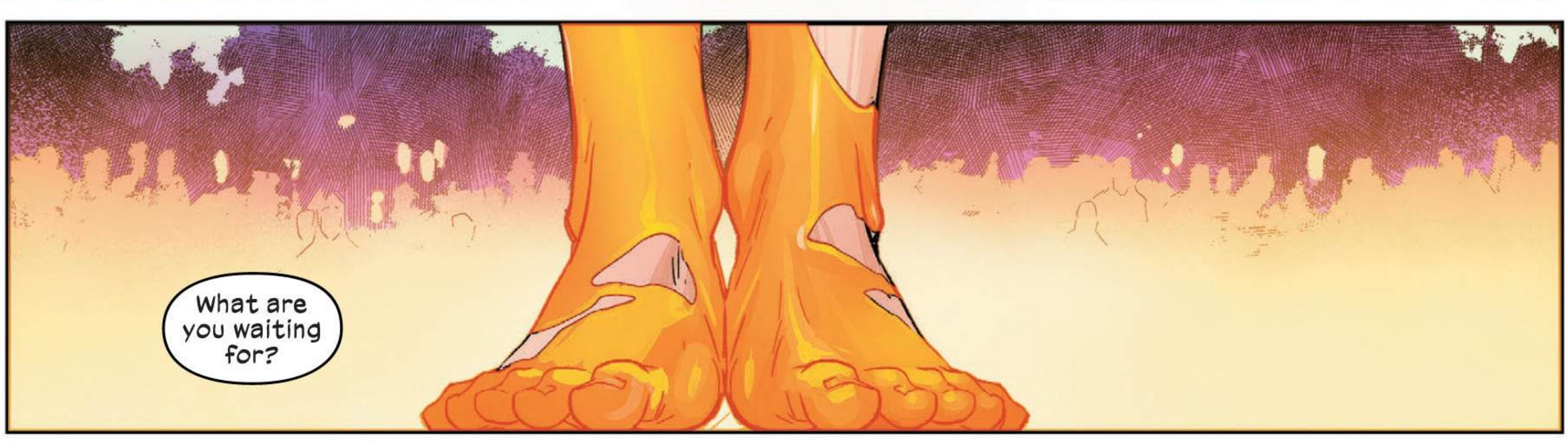
"How do you explain something like this?

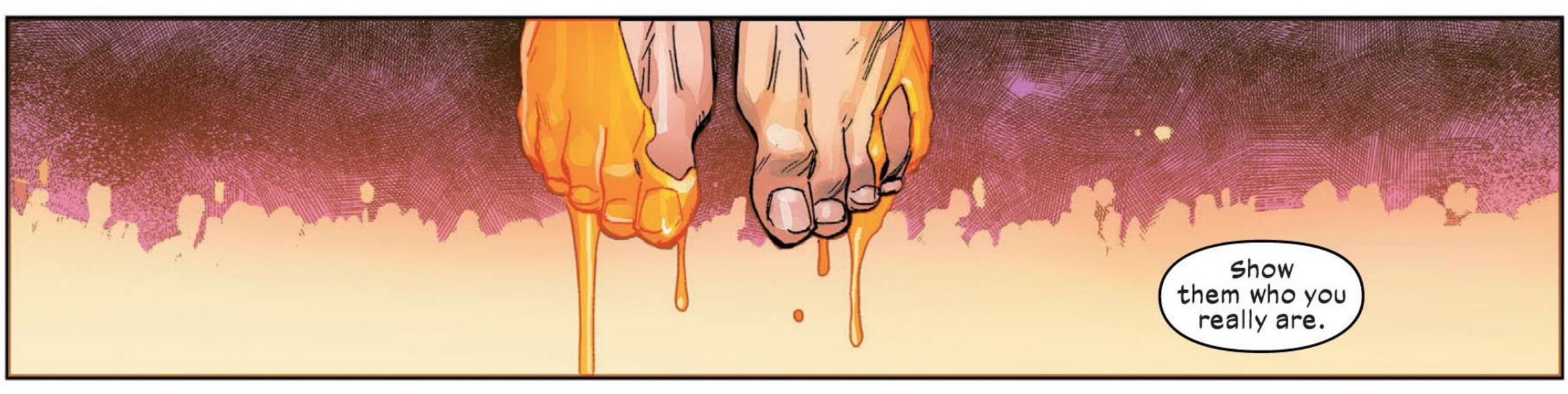


I... I'm back. I'm *whole.*
Thank you.

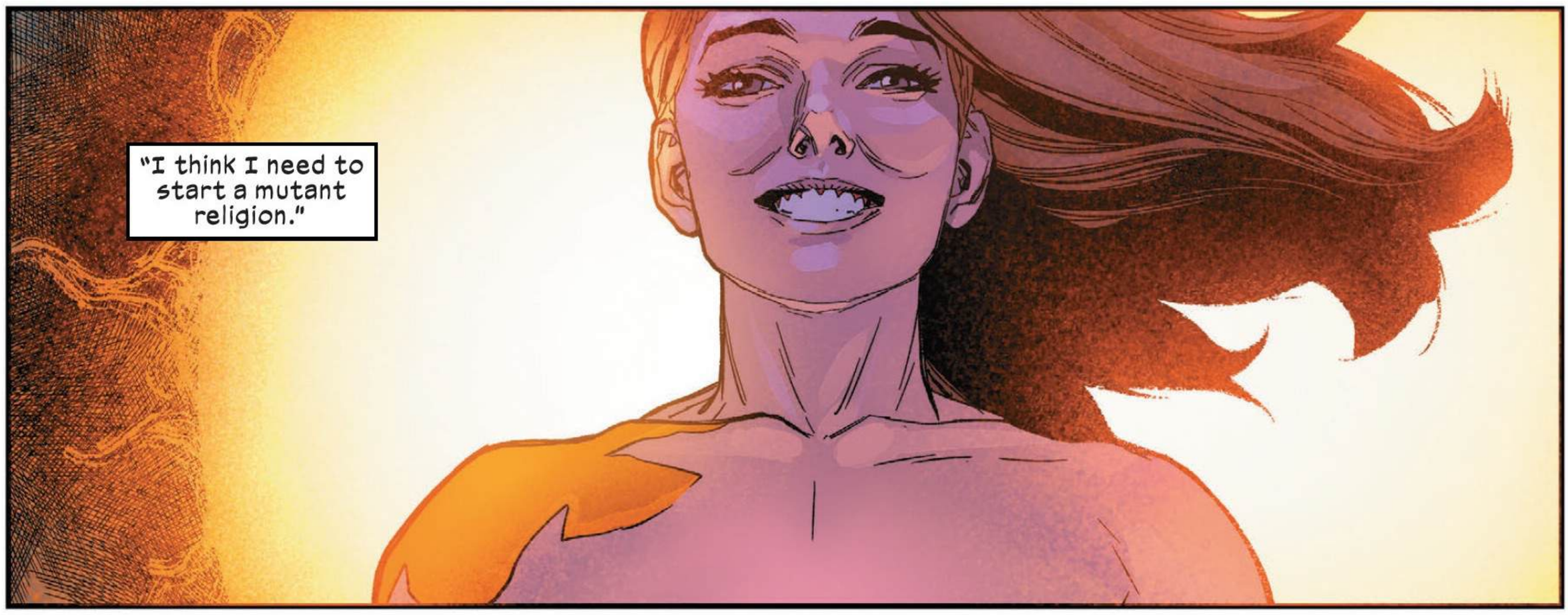
I deserve no credit for revealing what was always there.
What victory there is *is yours* and *yours alone.*
All that's left for you to do is claim it.

Still...*thank you.*
You're welcome, child.
*Now...*


What are you waiting for?


Show them who you really are.

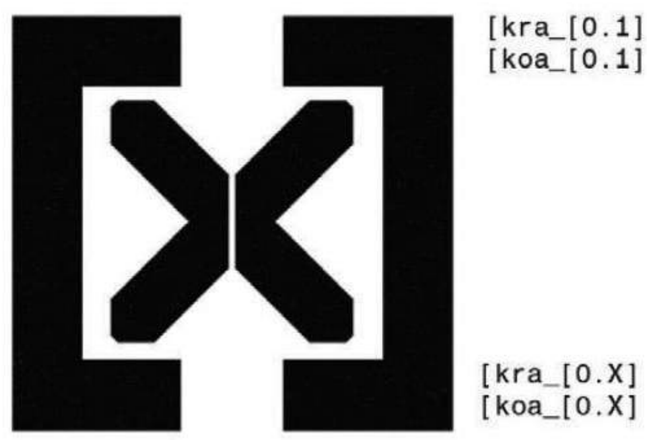
Right or wrong. It sure is something, isn't it?
Yes. Yes, it is.
Scott?
Yeah?


"I think I need to start a mutant religion."

RD
NW '14

# Into the Storm

8



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# PSYCHIC RESCUE

The island-nation of Krakoa requires defense -- and one of its greatest protectors is a mutant named Storm. A longtime defender of mutantkind, Storm recently fought Orchis and the Children of the Vault with the X-Men.

Jean Grey

Emma Frost

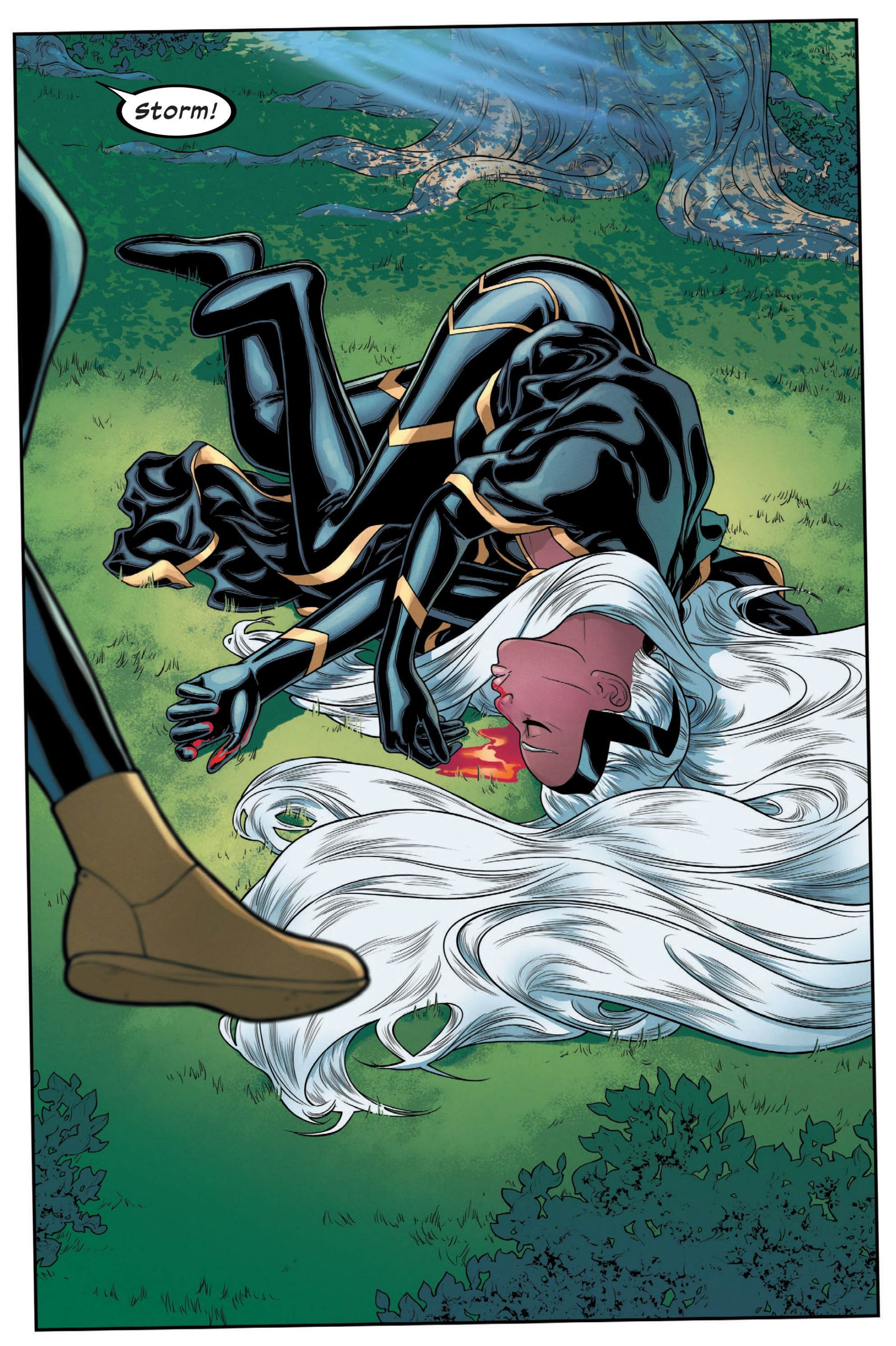
Storm

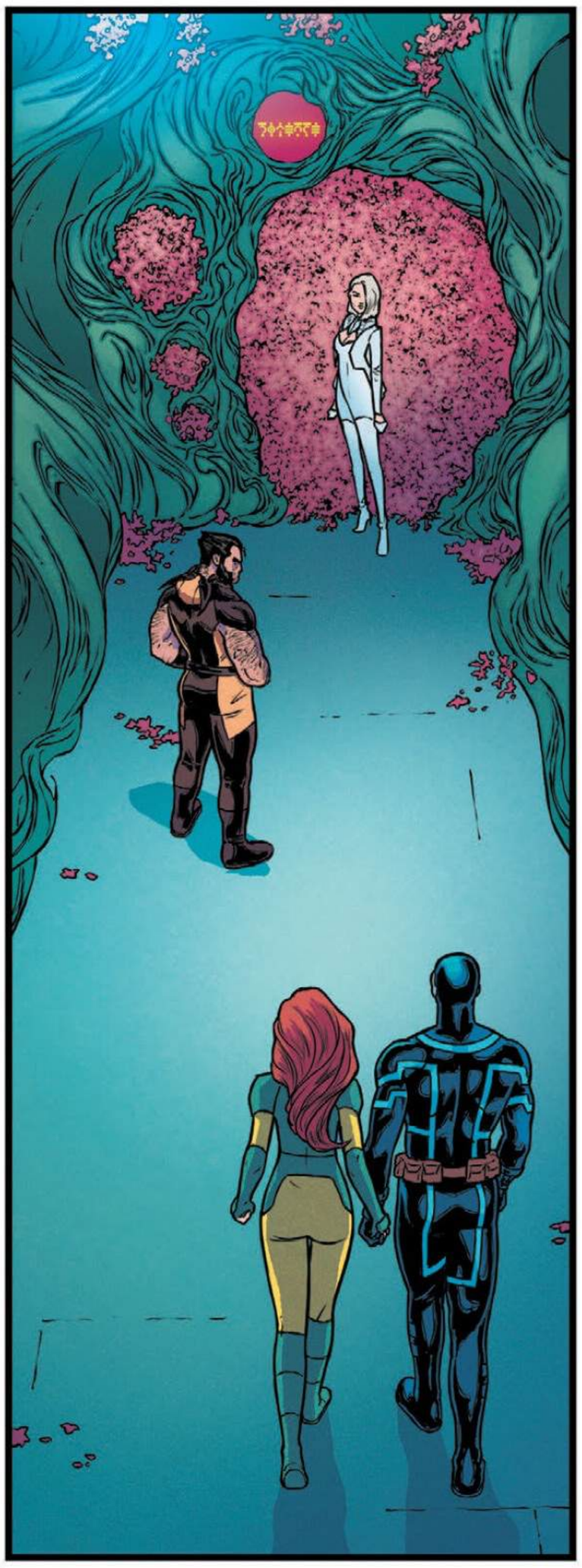
Wolverine

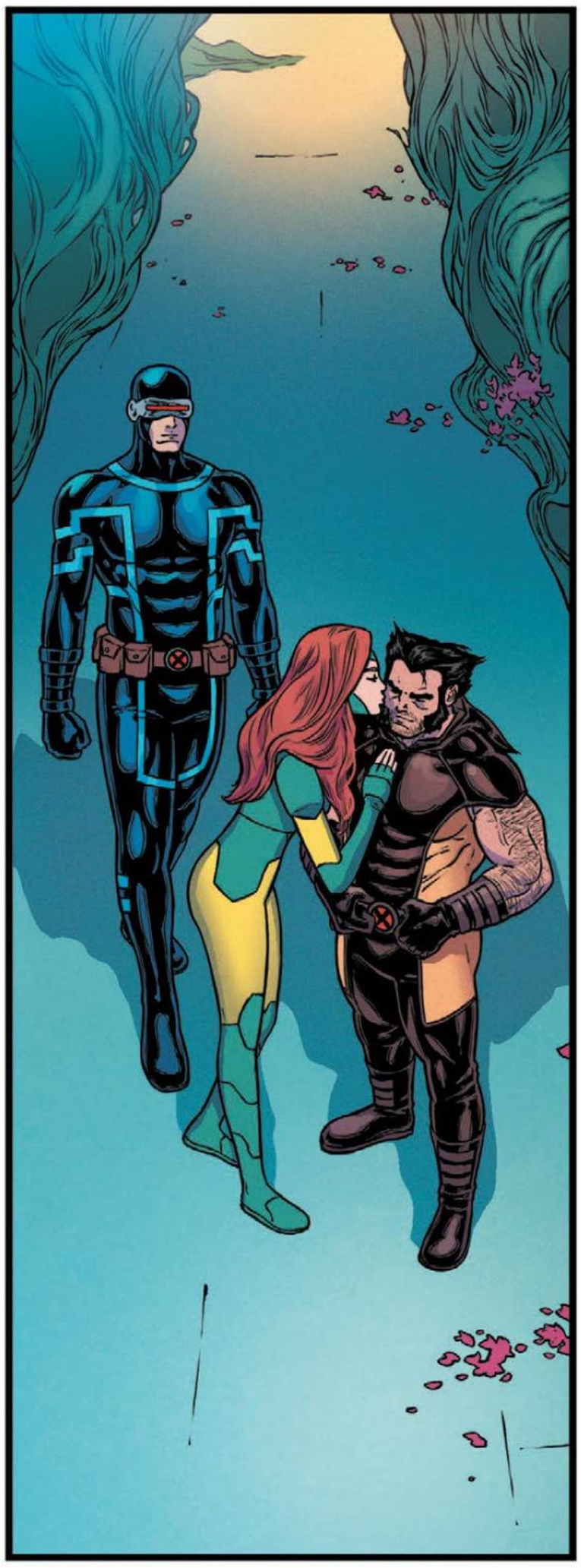
Cyclops

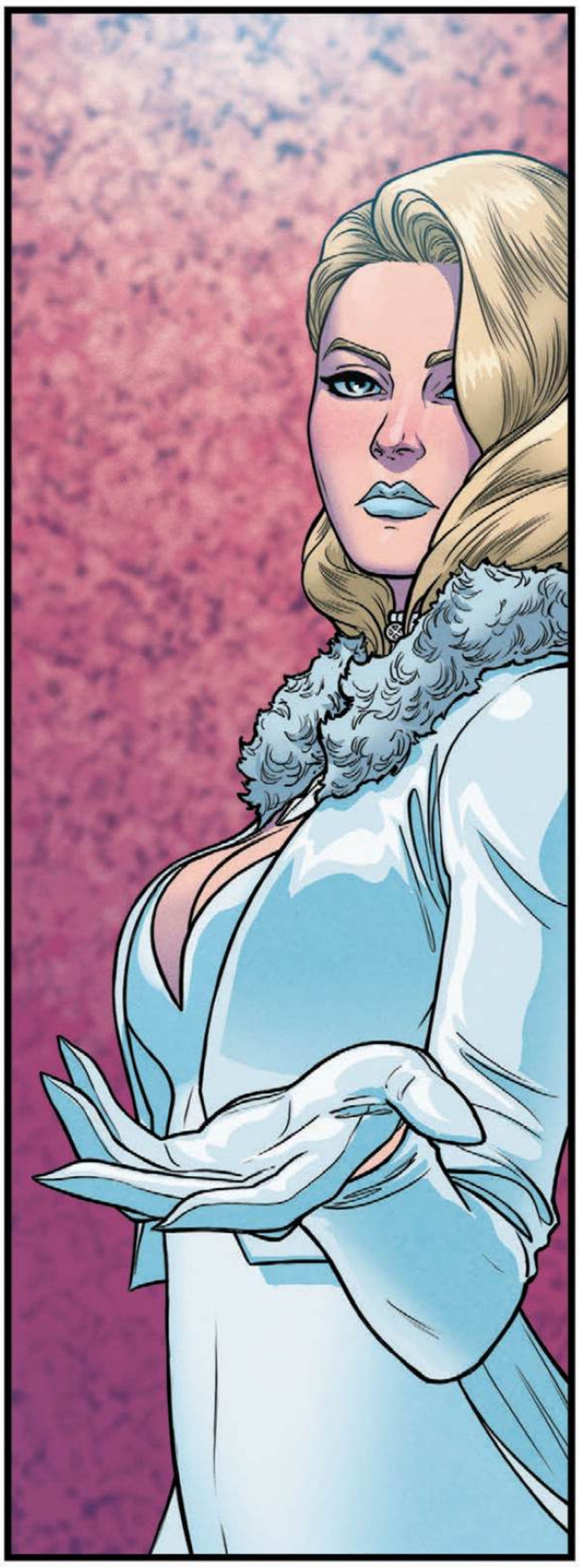
Haha!
Catch me if you can!
I'll give you a head start.
You're gonna need it!
Hey! Did you see that?
Yeah...

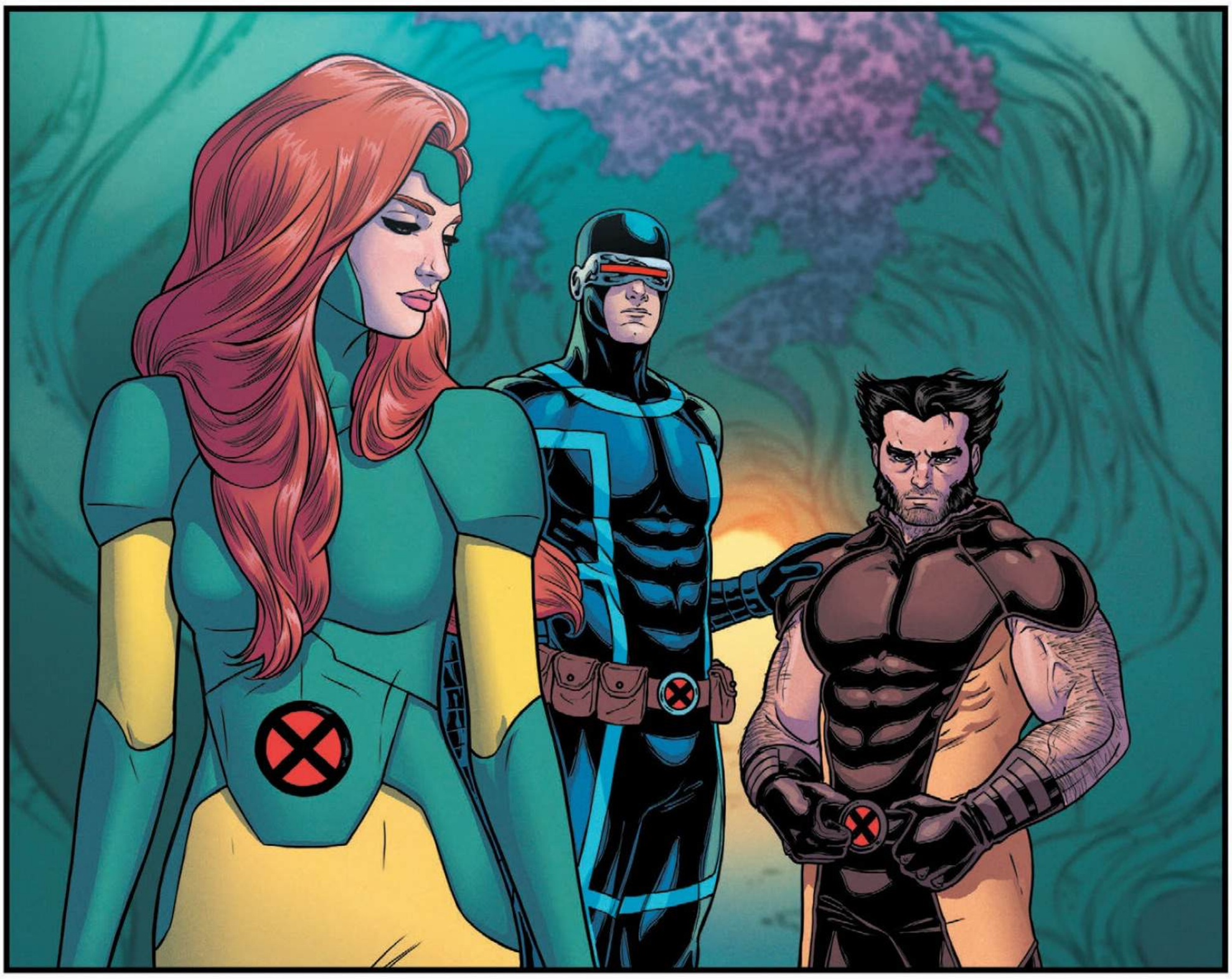
It came from over here.
Do you see anything?
No. I...
Wait. There's something over...
Yeah. I see something...
Someone.
Oh no. It's...

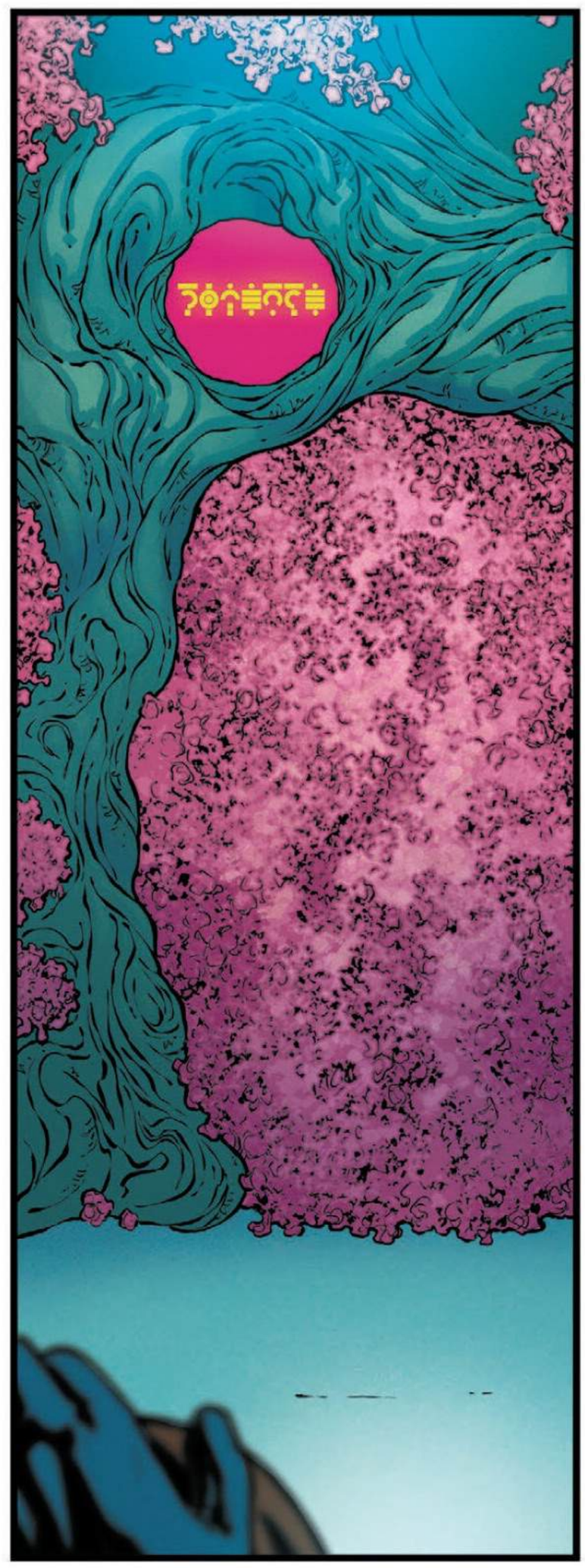

Storm!







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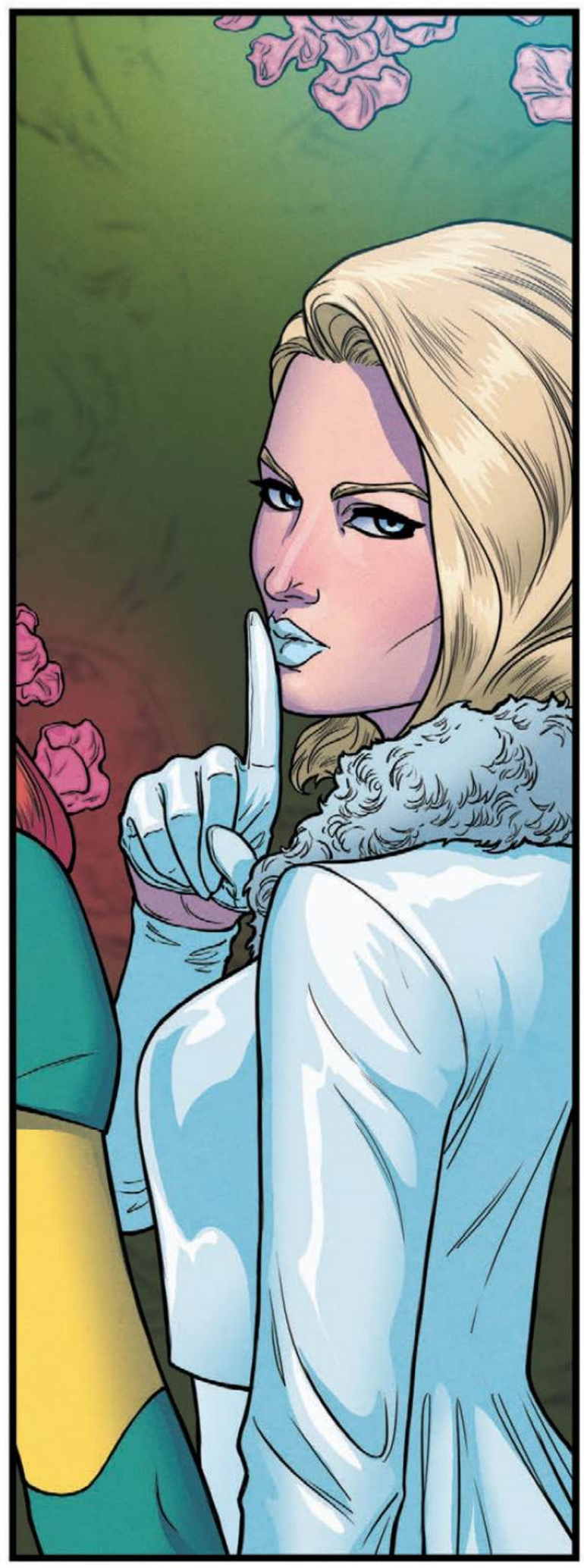

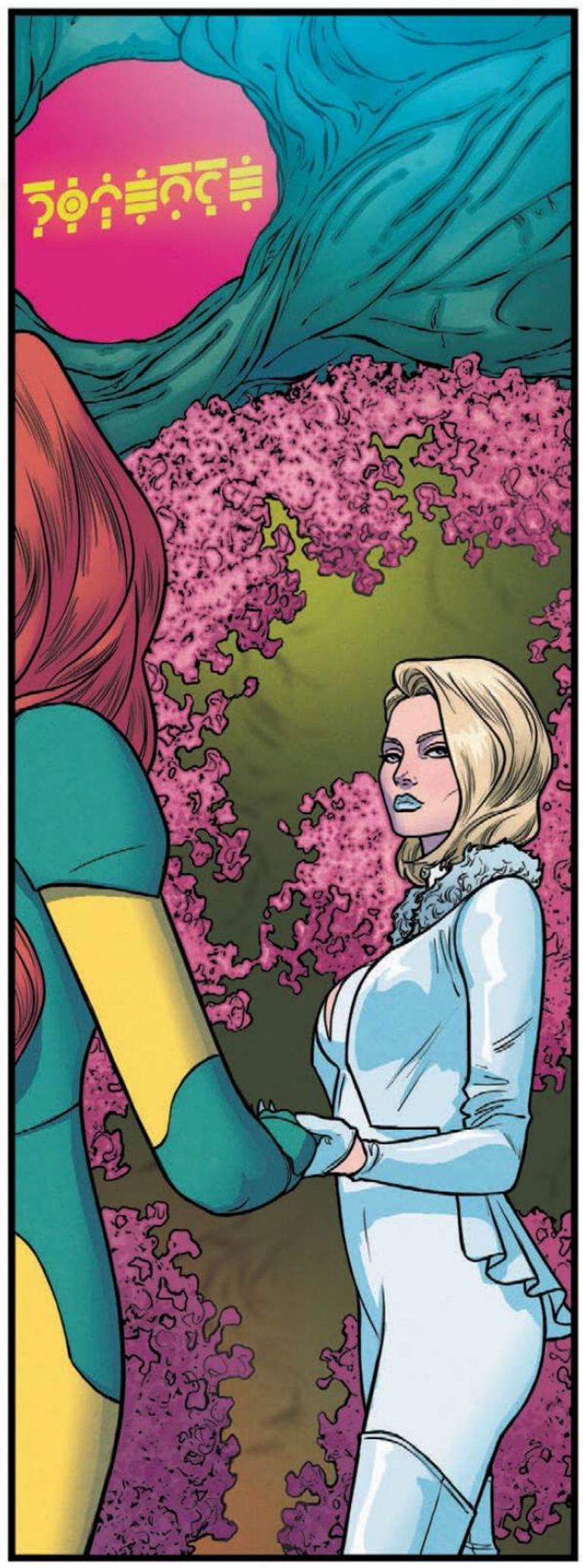
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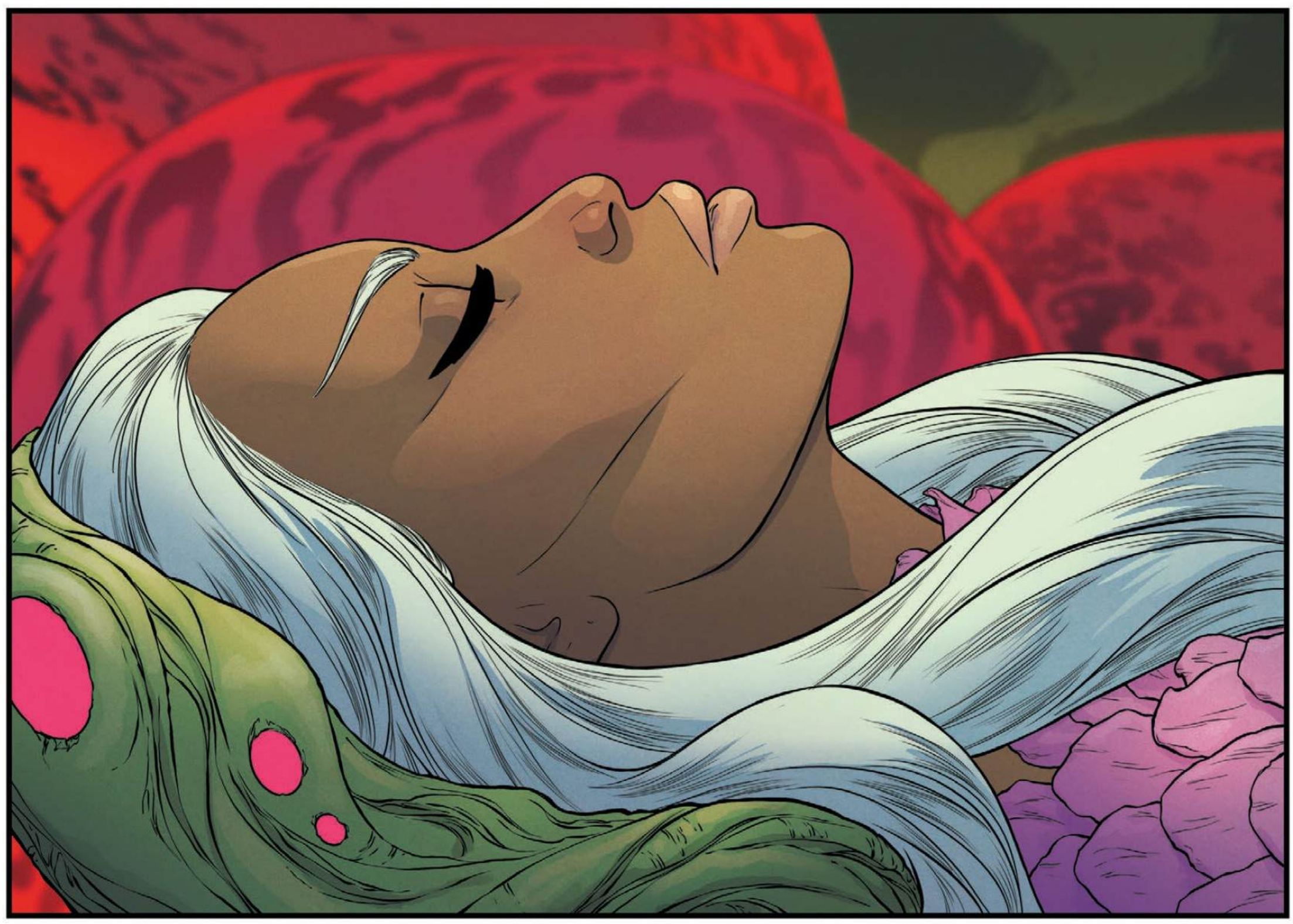
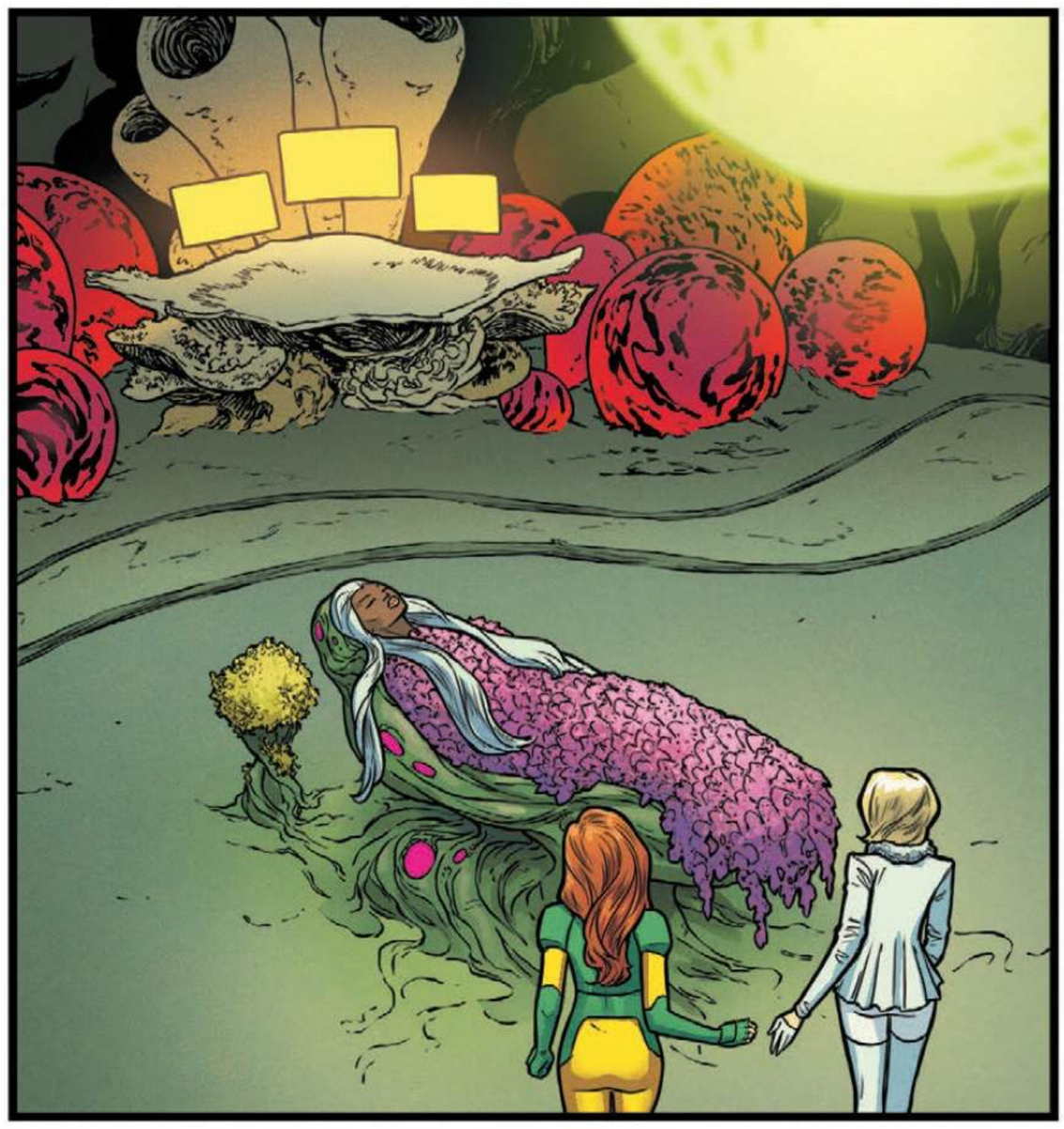
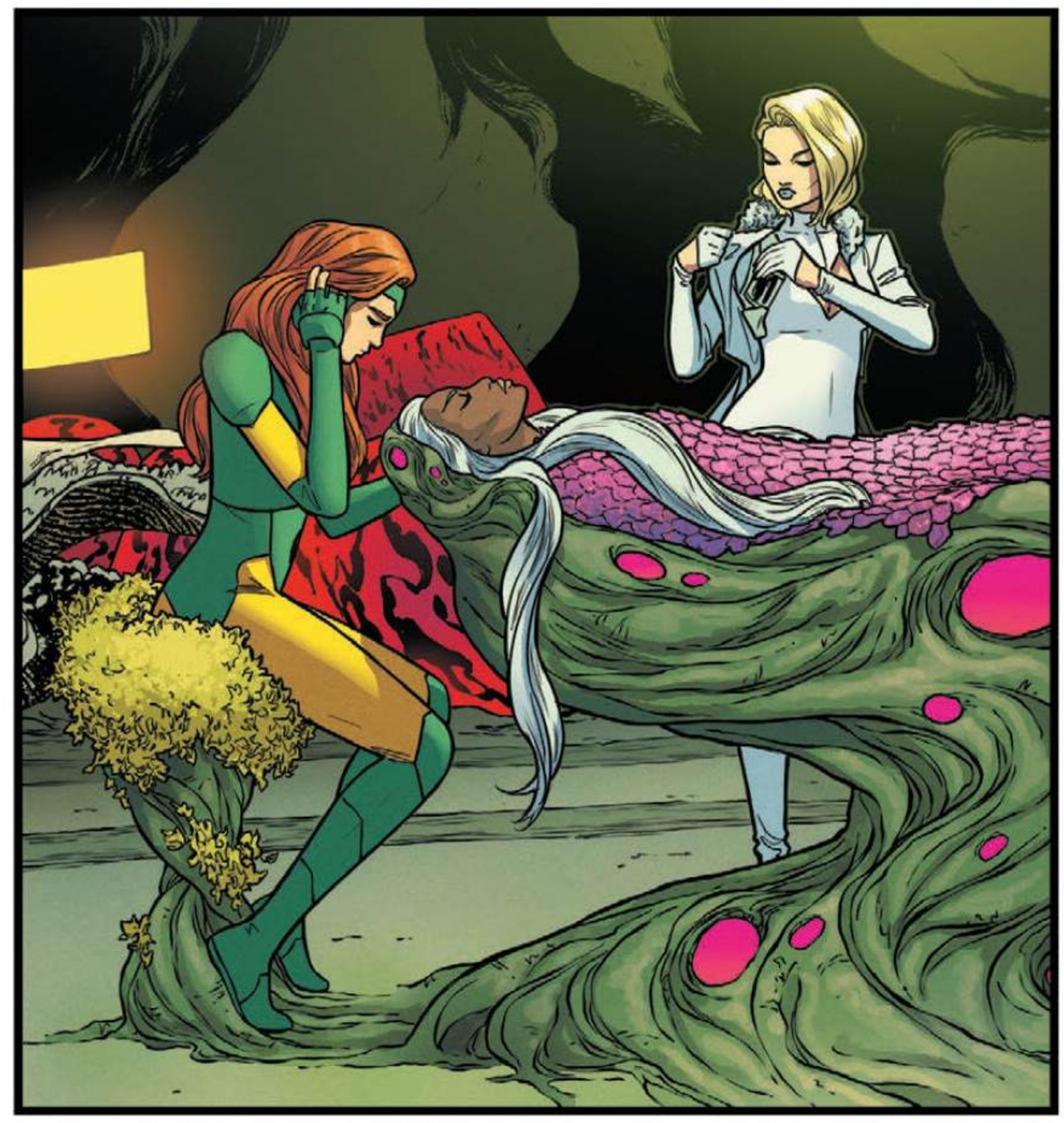
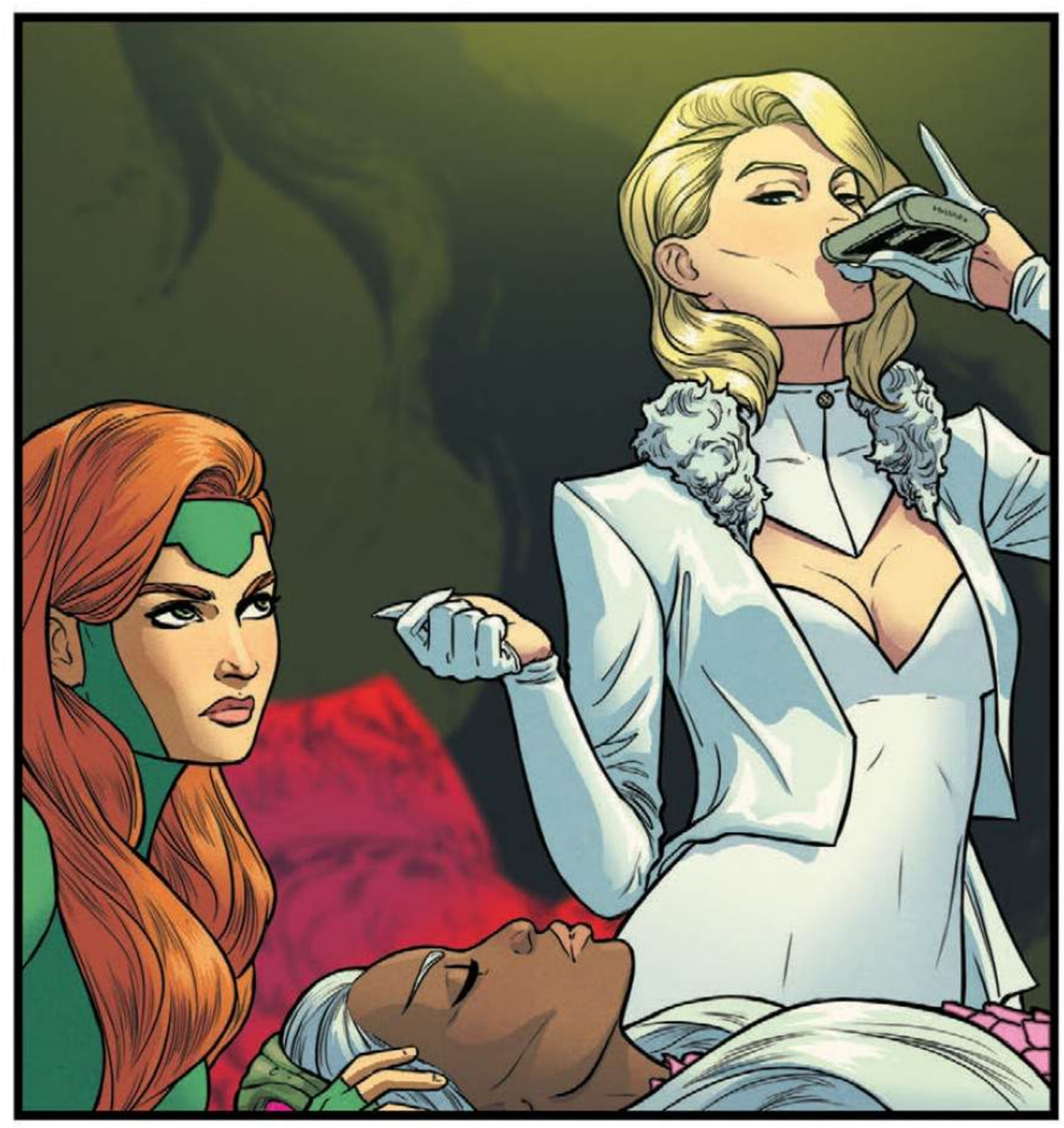
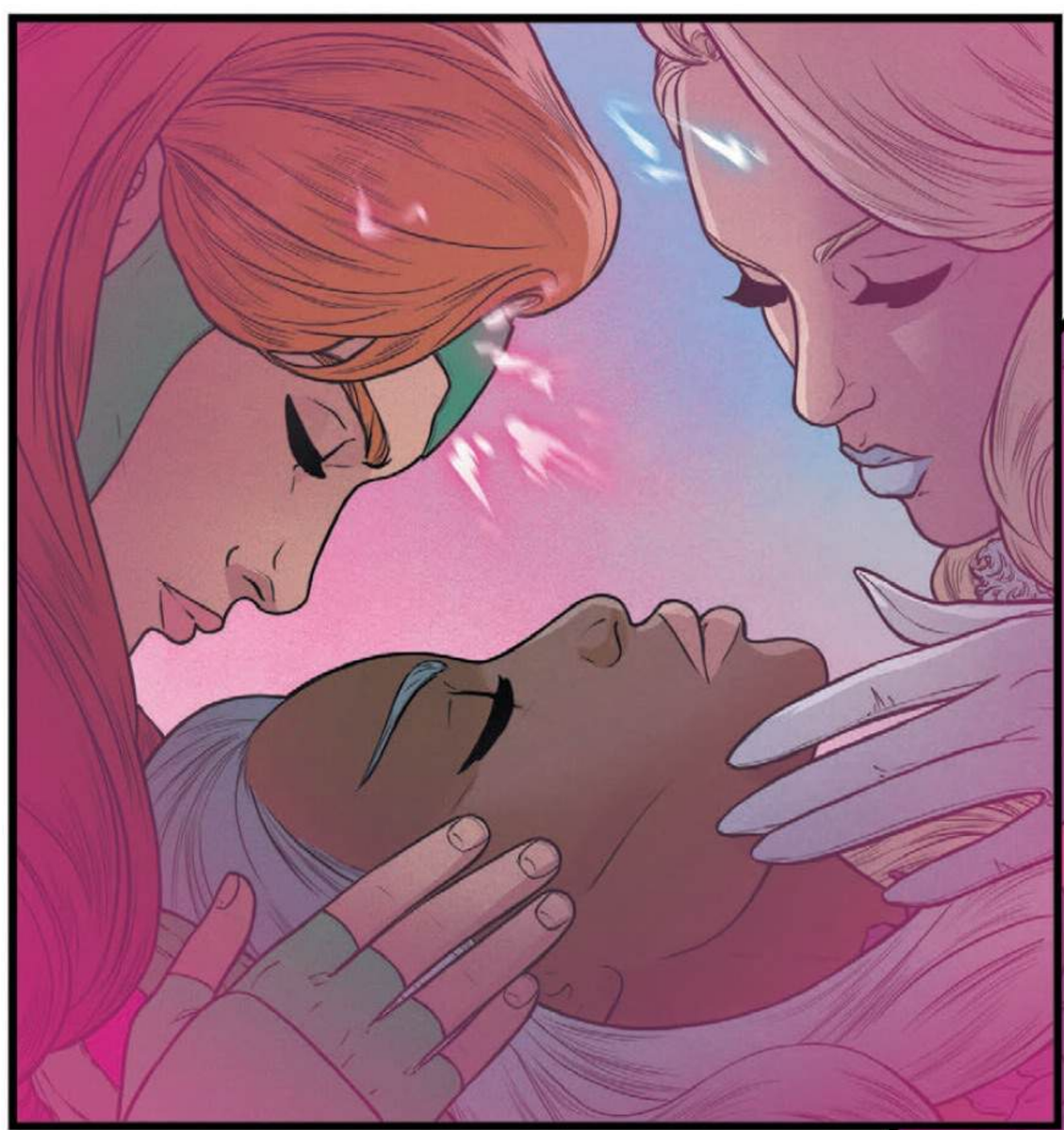
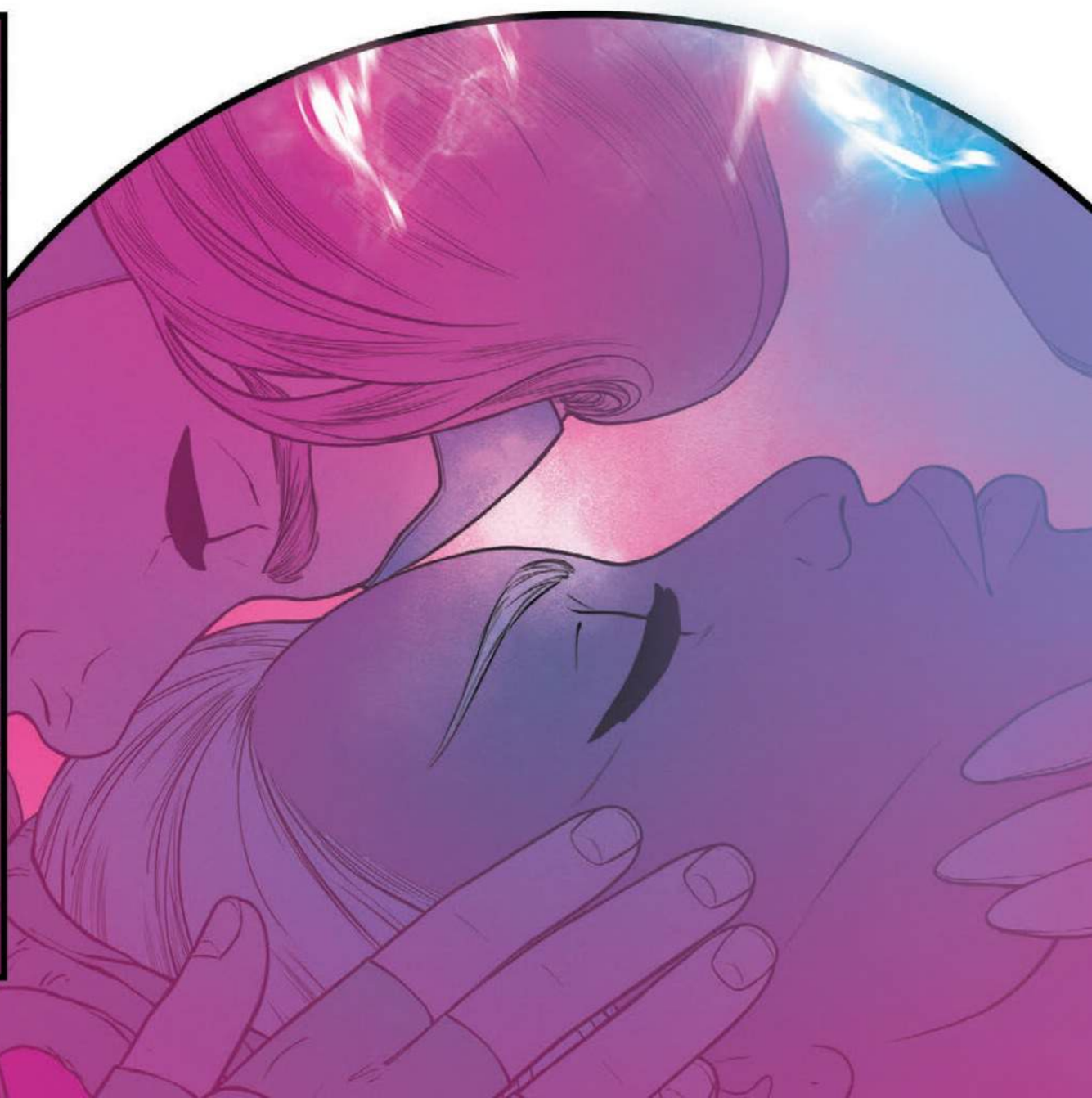


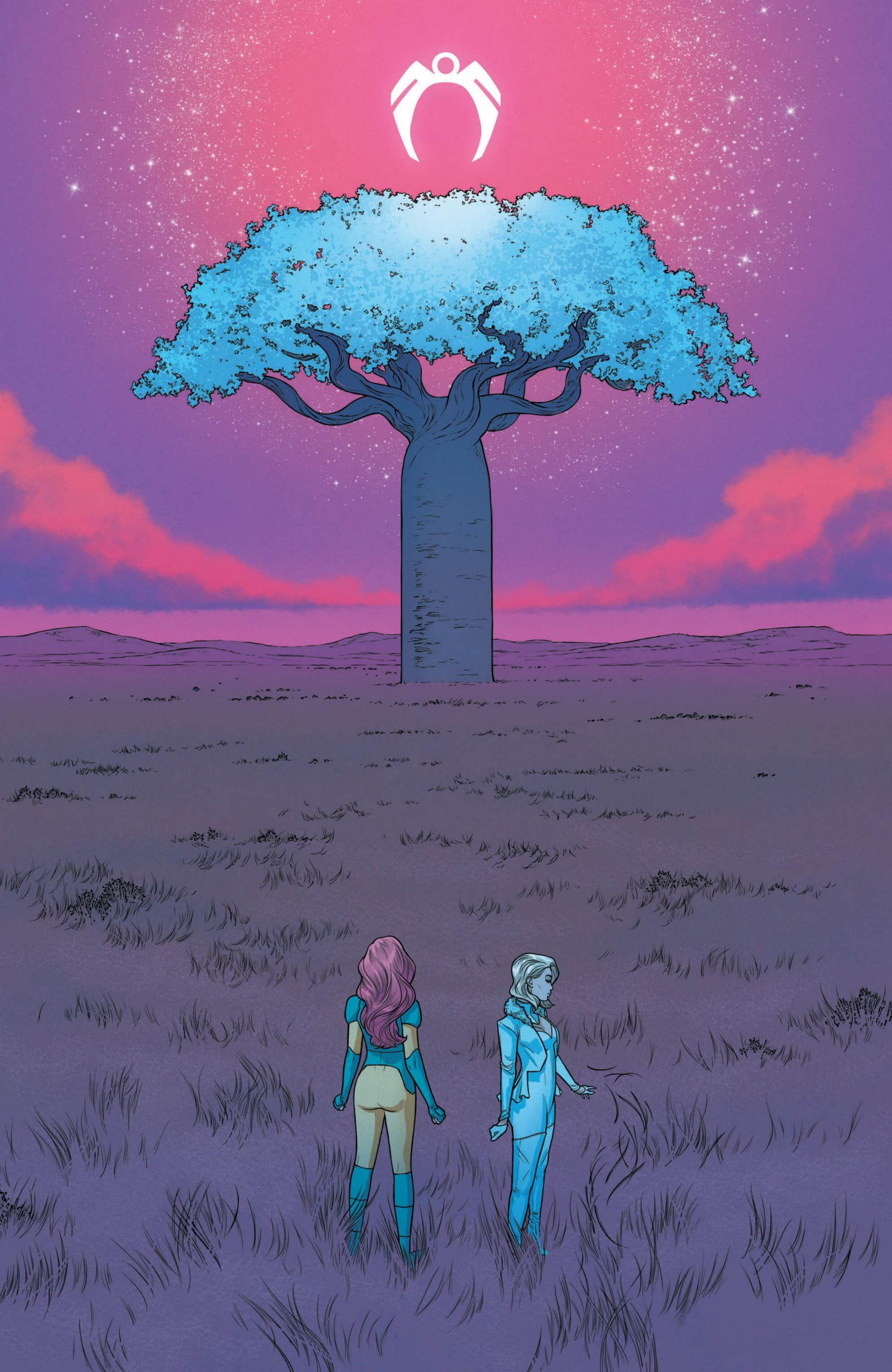


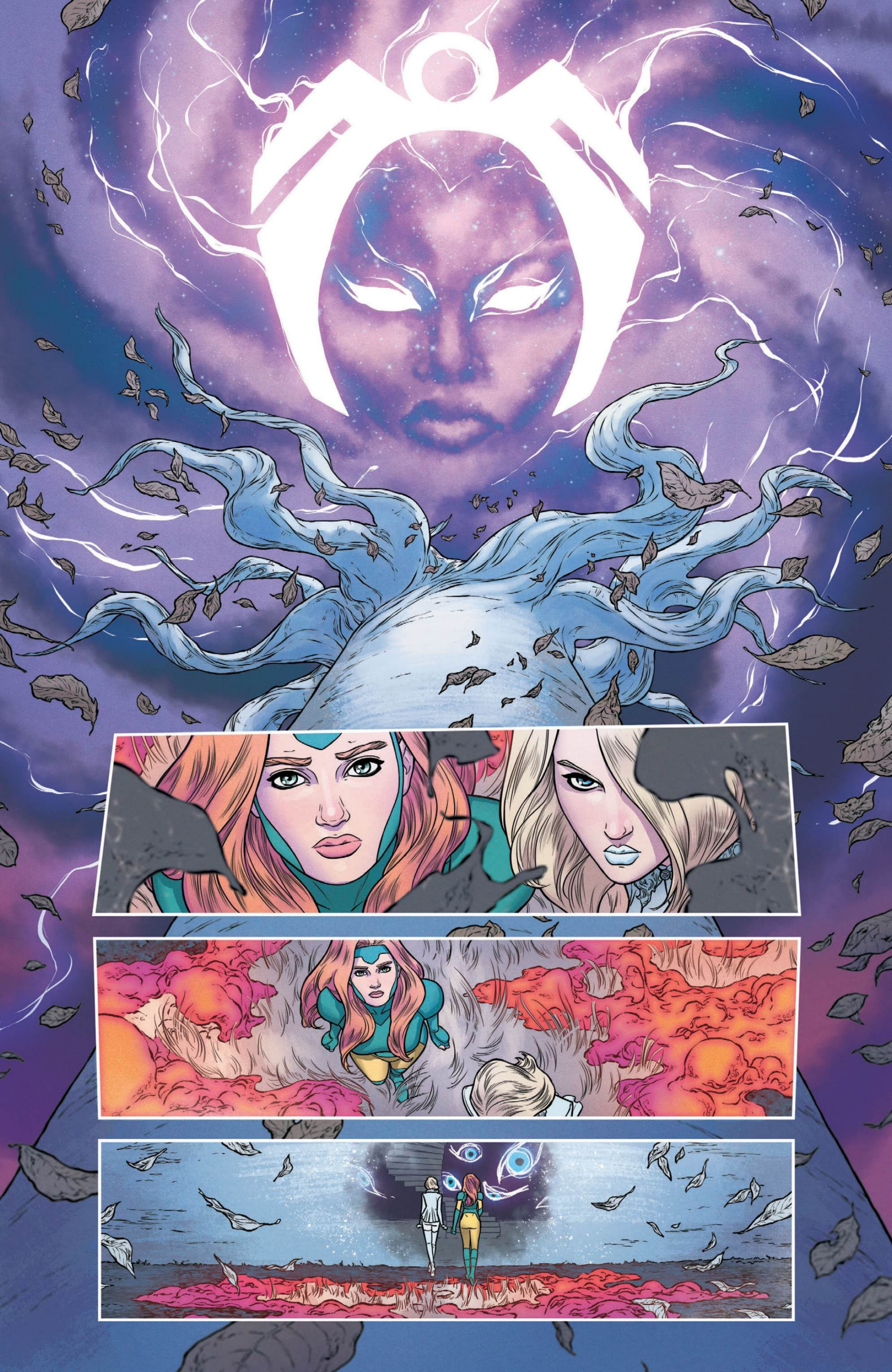


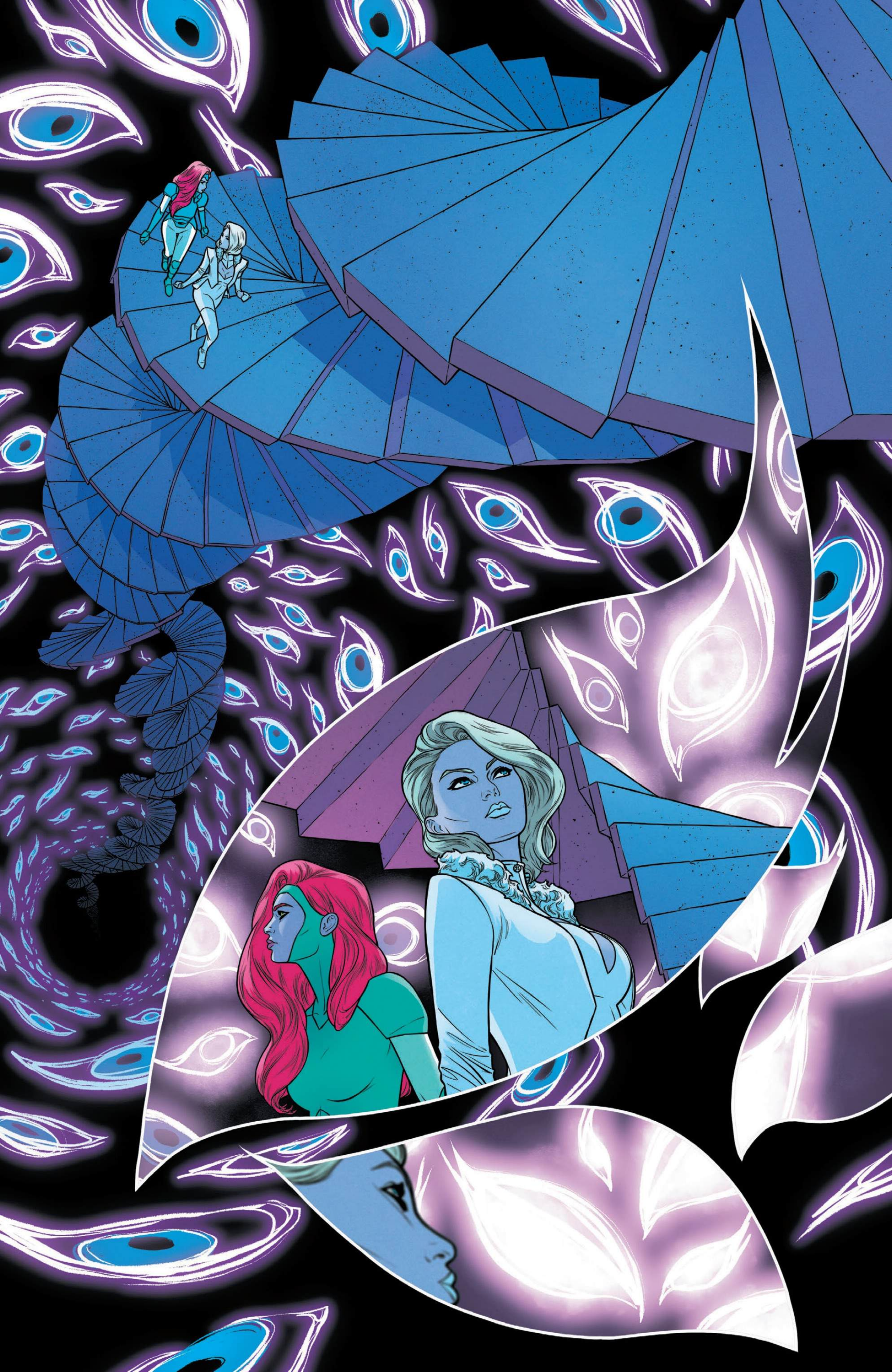


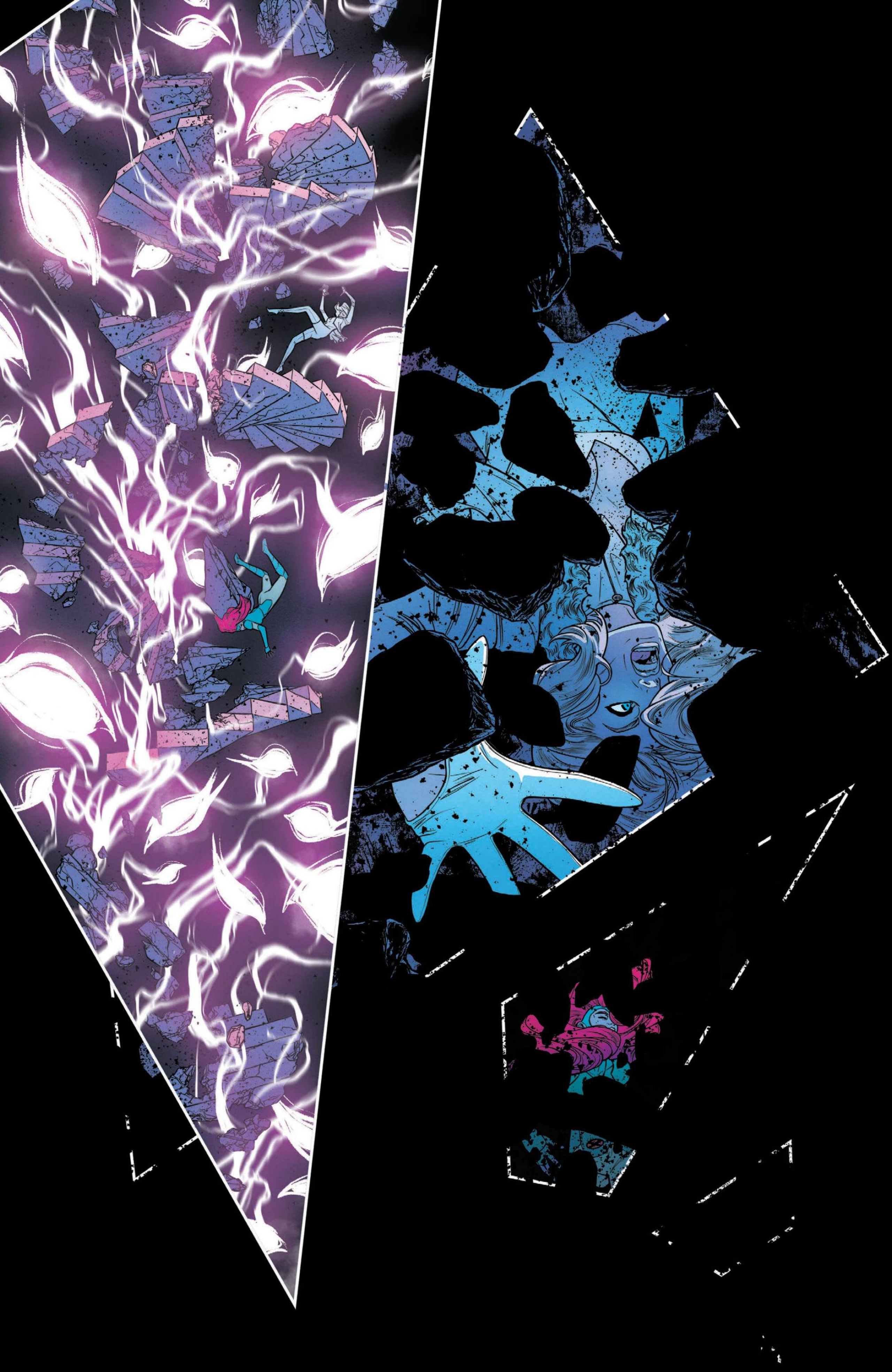


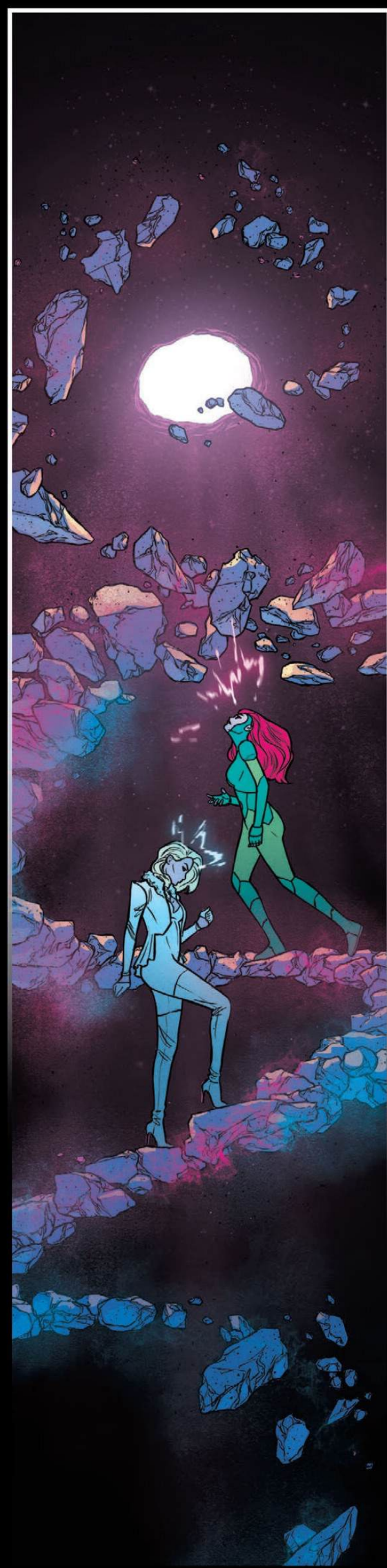


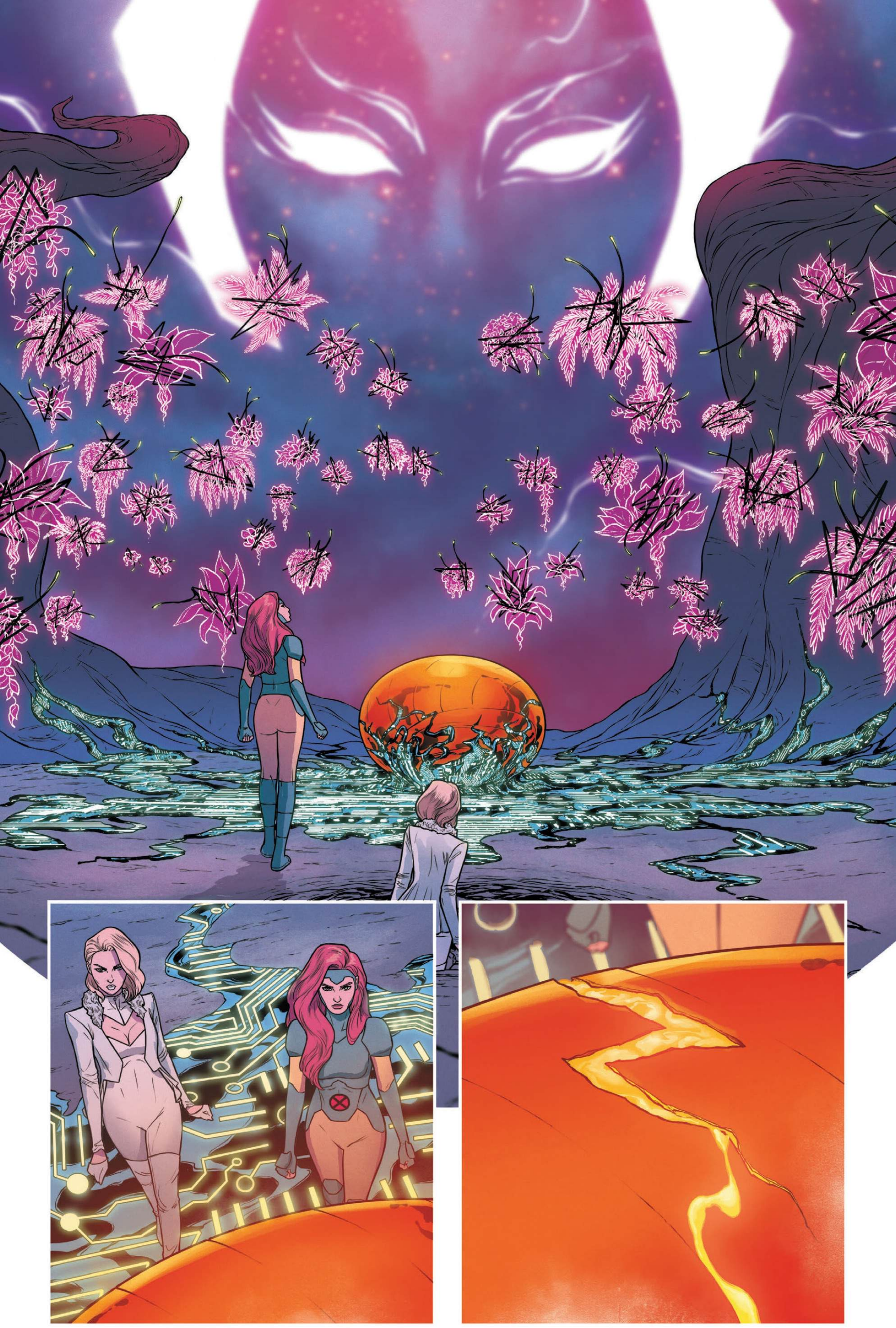




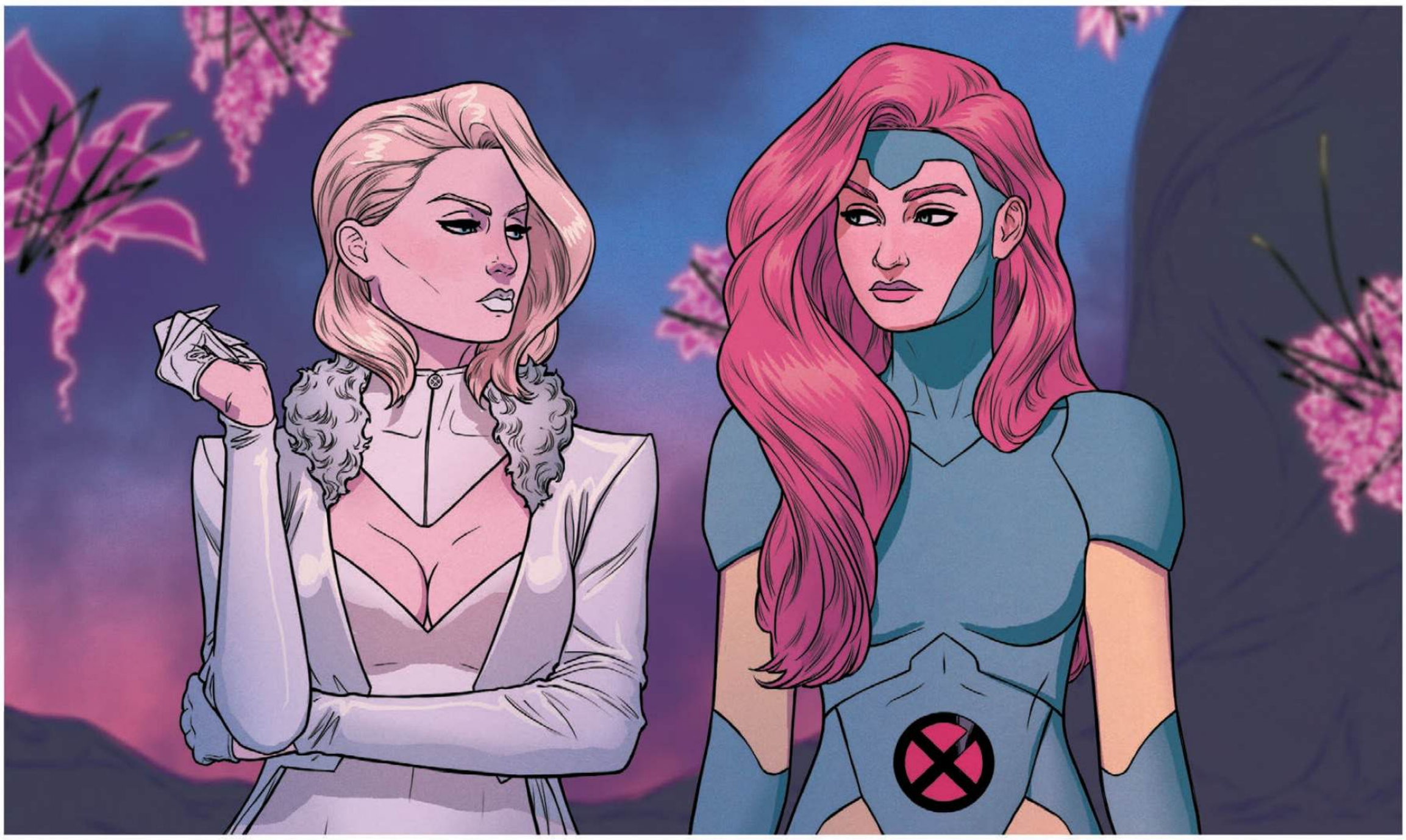


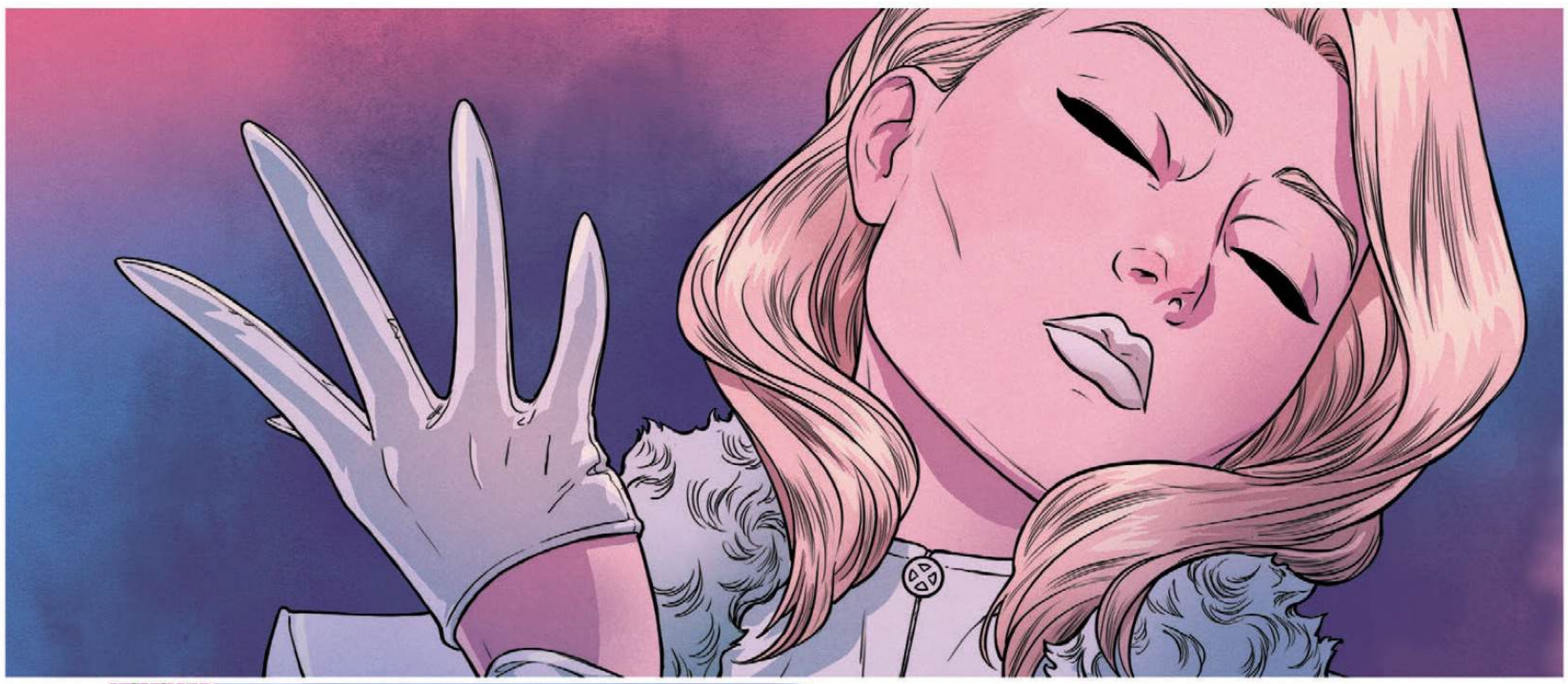


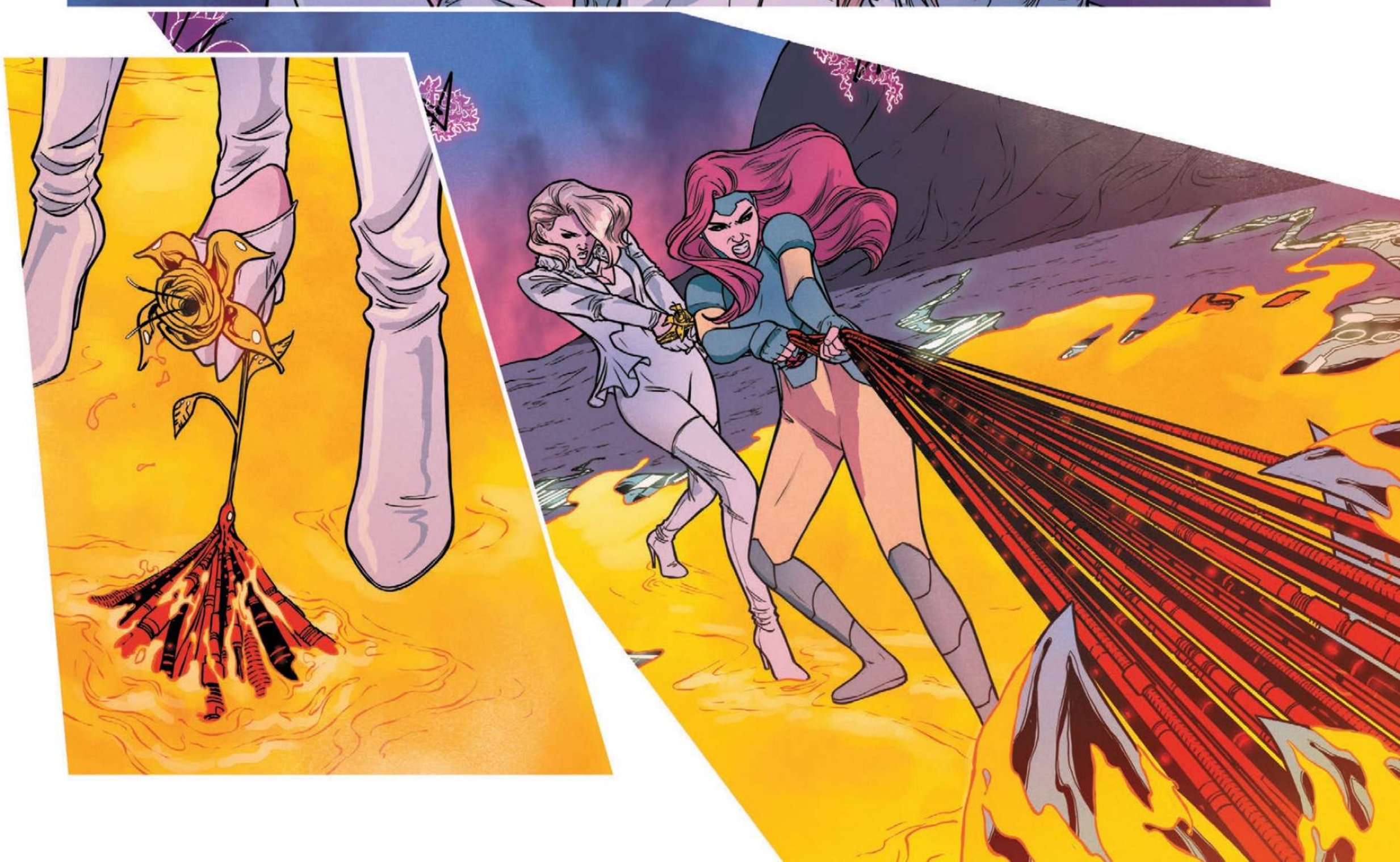


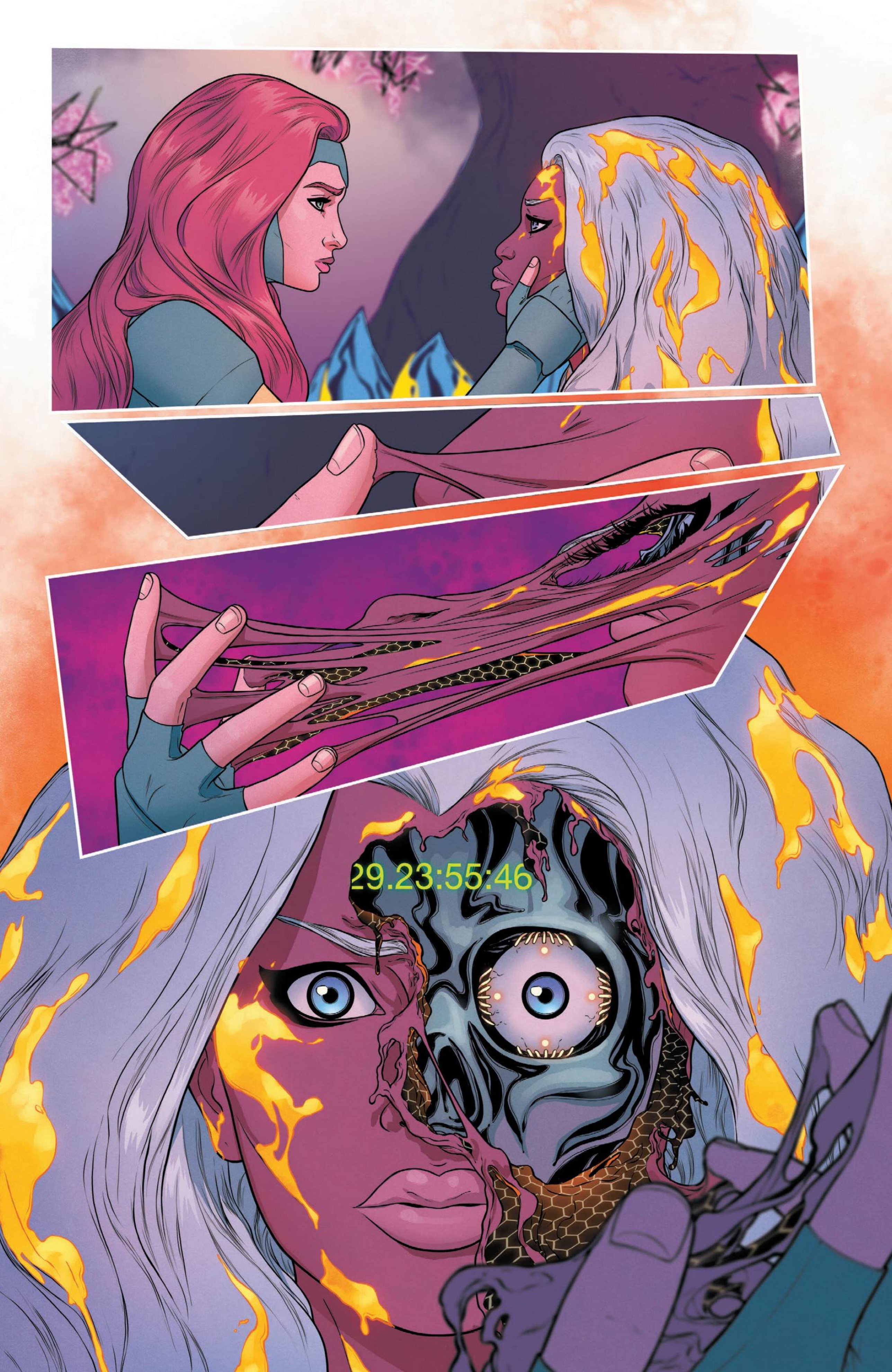


Metal?
Mr. Adkins?

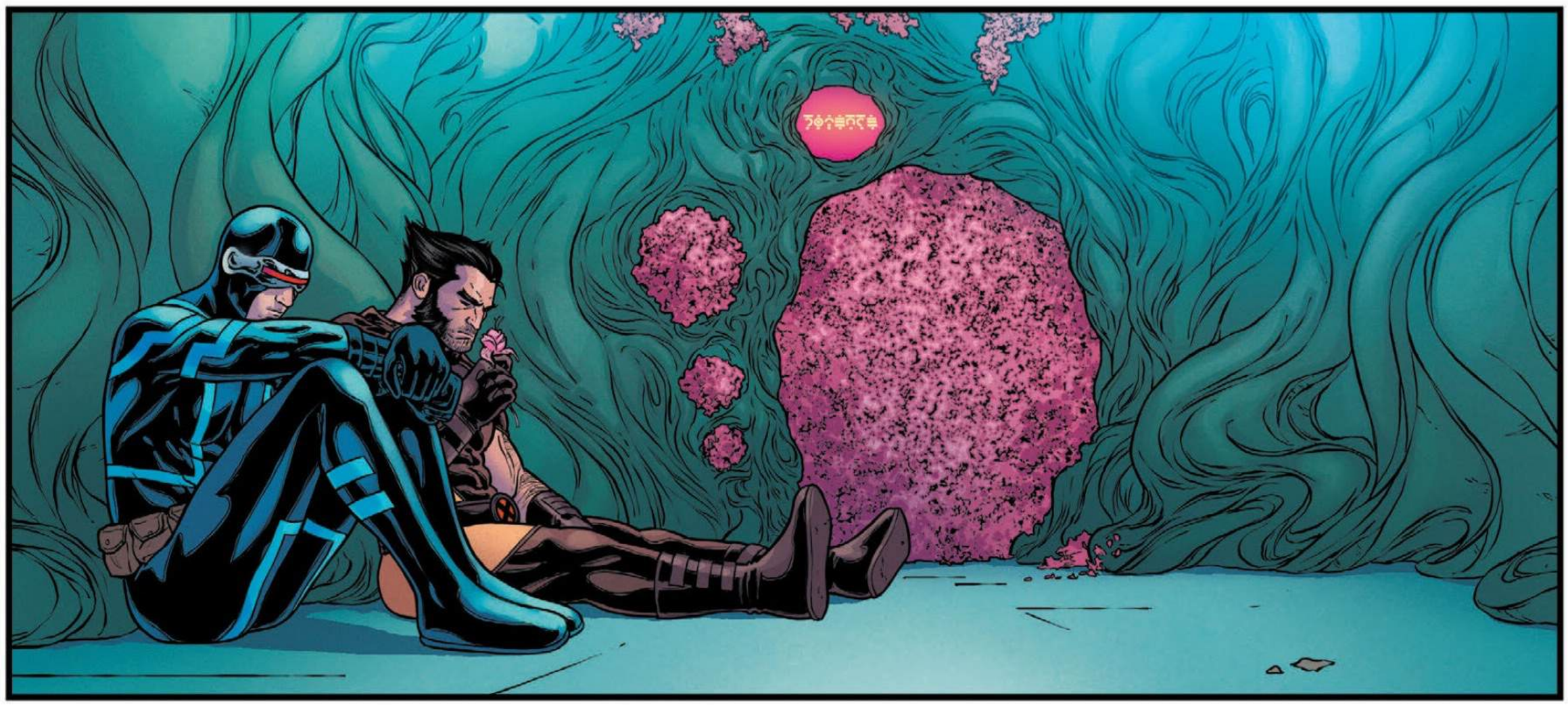


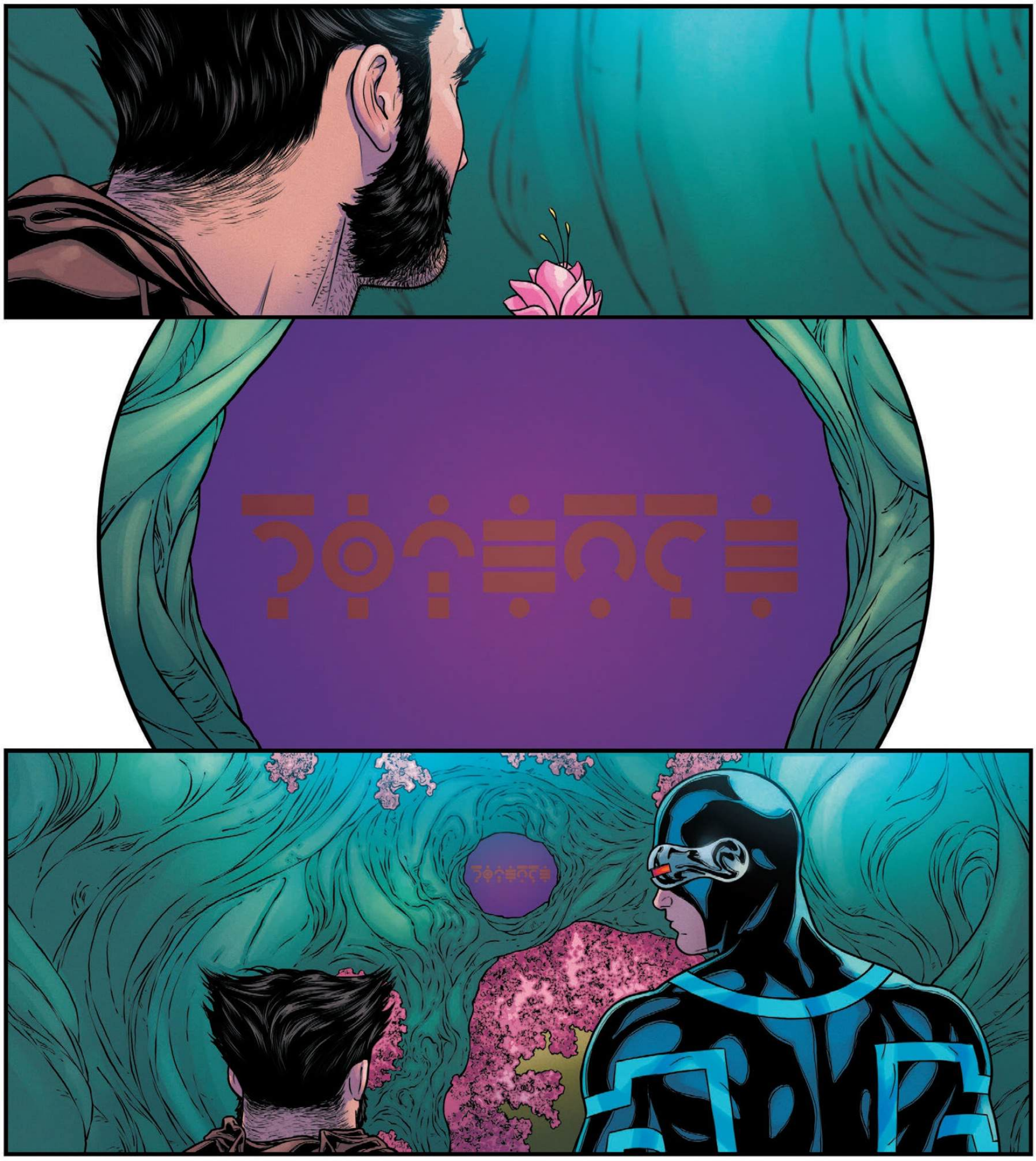


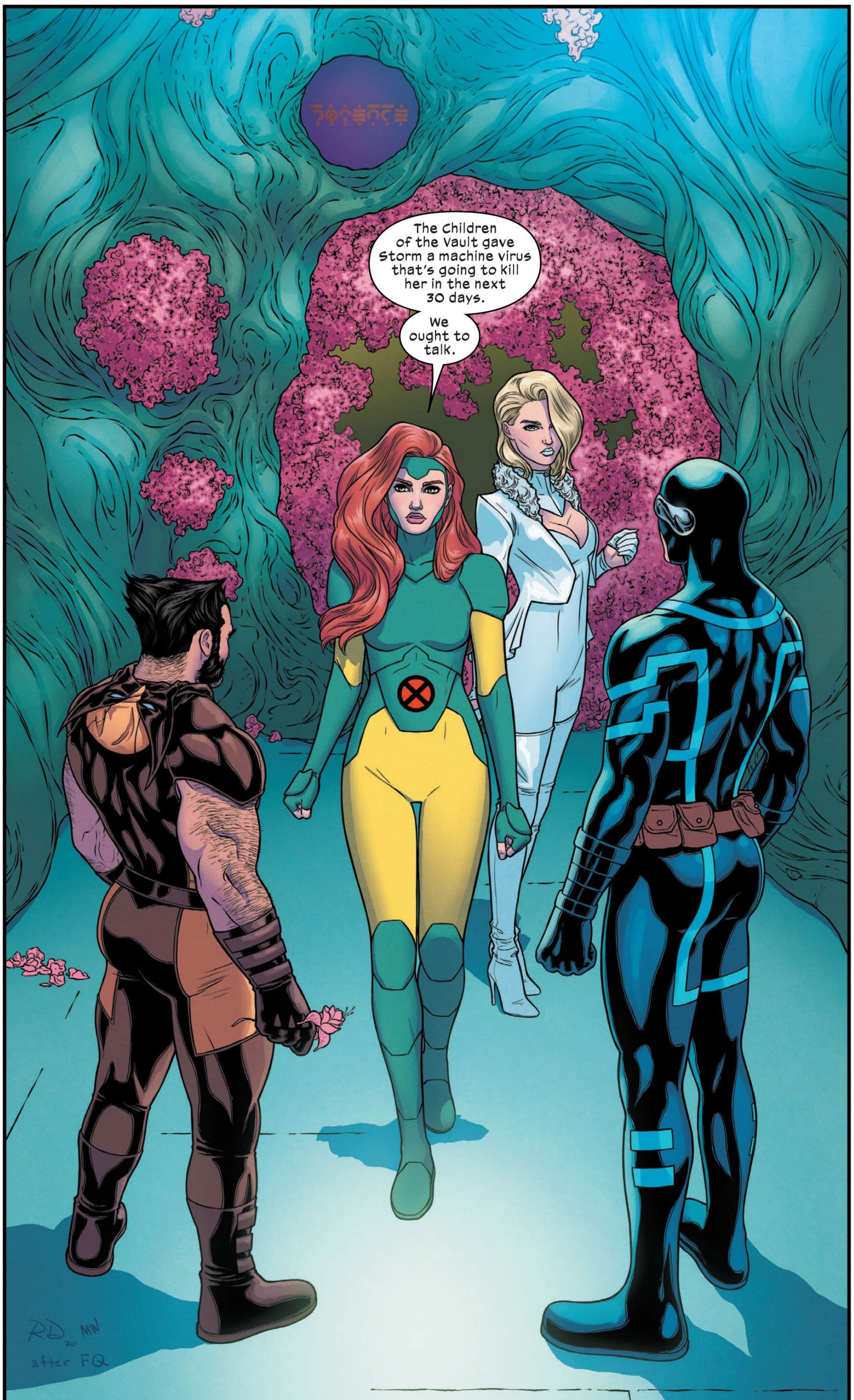



29.23:55:46

SAVE US





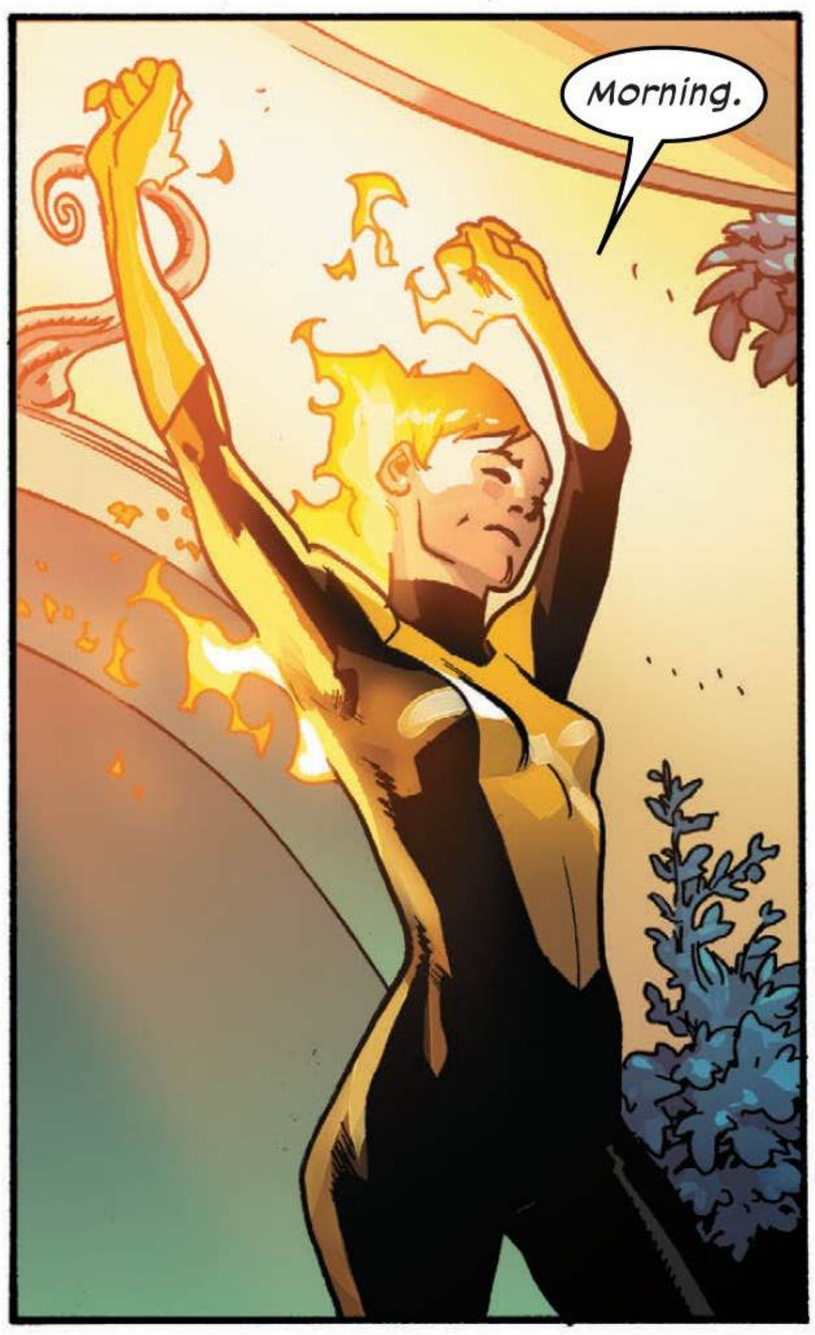

The Children of the Vault gave Storm a machine virus that's going to kill her in the next 30 days.
We ought to talk.
RD 20 MW after FQ

LENIN

# Swarm

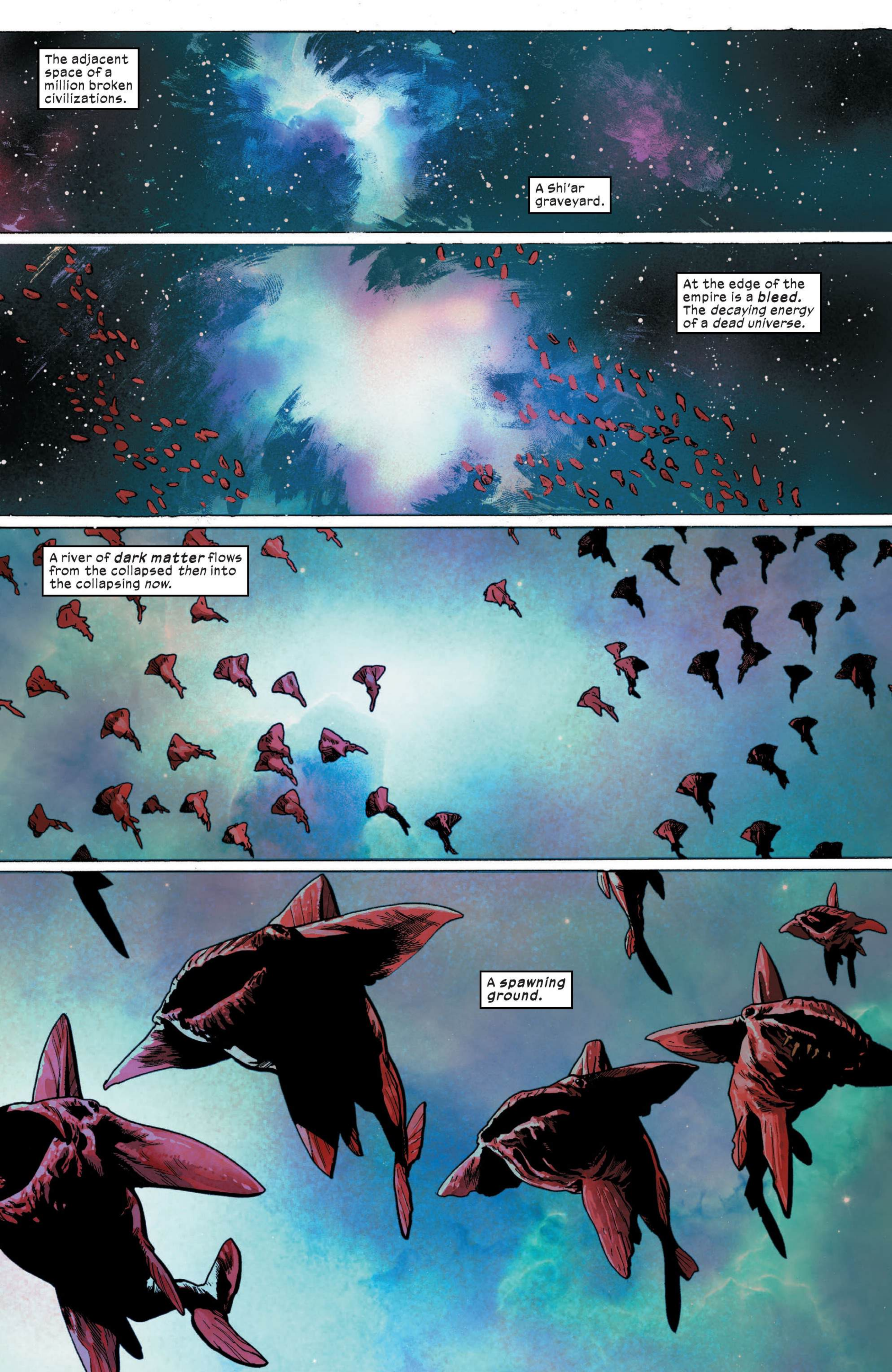
# 9

Krakoa.
The Akademos Habitat.
The Sextant.



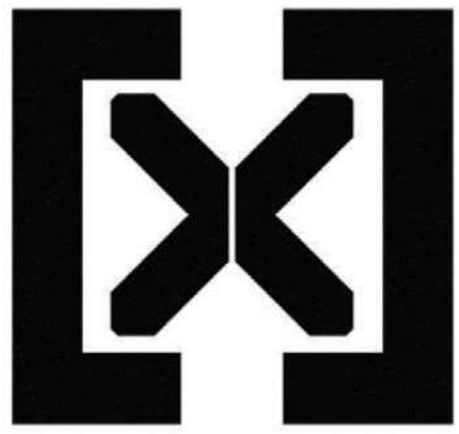
...just something Rahne brought back from space.

Space stuff, space junk... whatever. Who knows?


The adjacent space of a million broken civilizations.
A Shi'ar graveyard.
At the edge of the empire is a **bleed.** The *decaying energy* of a *dead universe.*
A river of ***dark matter*** flows from the collapsed *then* into the collapsing *now.*
A ***spawning ground.***

For predators.
For parasites.
For Brood.

Always expanding. All-consuming. Their numbers unimaginable.
Ten thousand *worlds*. Six trillion *drones*. One thousand ***queens***.
As are the stars are their numbers, and they have gathered here now for one thing:
To hunt the ***King Egg***.



[kra_[0.8]
[koa_[0.8]

[kra_[0.X]
[koa_[0.X]

# SOMETHING'S COMING

The New Mutants recently returned from a mission in Shi'ar space... and they brought more than memories back with them.

Wolfsbane

Mirage

Magma

Magik

Vulcan

Cyclops

Havok

Oya

Broo

Jean Grey

[kra_[0.8]...]
[koa_[0.8]...]

[A._New_World]

# SHI'AR BATTLE RECORD



## RE: THE FAULT

An after-action report of the events surrounding the War of Kings and the death of Lilandra Neramani.

[1]
GLADIATOR [Kallark]: Crowned Majestor of the empire after the death or exile of a Neramani heir. Former Superguardian and leader of the Imperial Guard.

[2]
BLACK BOLT [Blackagar Boltagon]: Killed at the conclusion of the war when a T-bomb detonated, ripping a hole in the fabric of space and time. This anomaly is known as the Fault, and nothing has ever escaped it.

[3]
VULCAN [Gabriel Summers]: Also killed at the conclusion of the war when the T-bomb detonated. VULCAN was also believed to have perished in the Fault.

Gabriel.

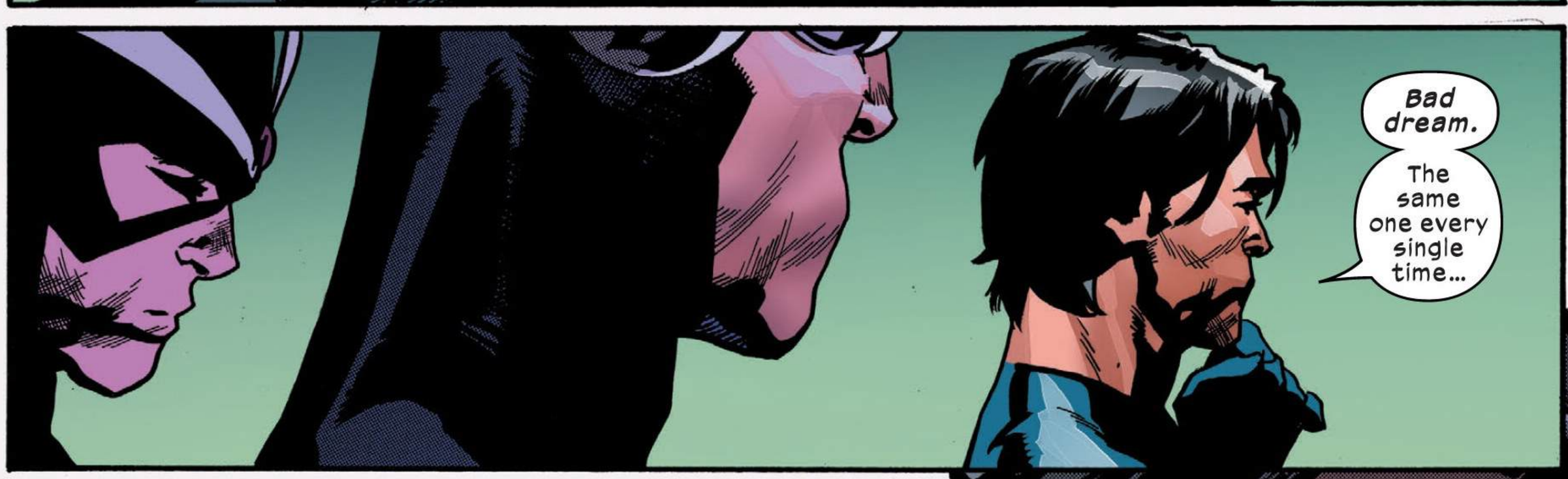
Gabriel.

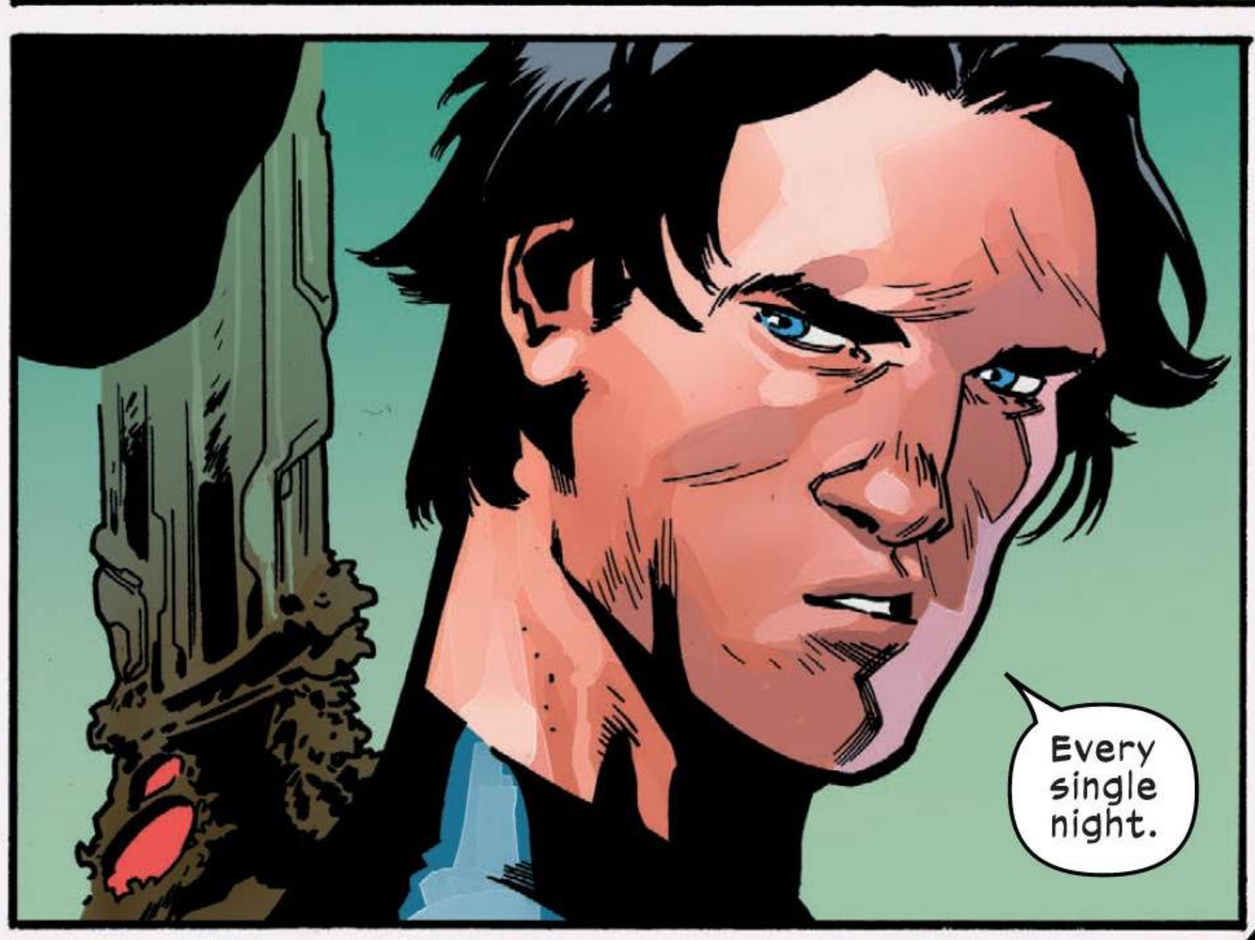
Gabriel, wake up.

There he is.
Brother, you look terrible.
Long night?
I fear...
I fear the fire within me has been extinguished.
That... that was the beer. You drowned it.
Shhh. I don't want any breakfast.

You gotta gear it back, man. Not judging, but you guys are a little outta control.
And you never clean up. Which makes it worse.
Come on, Gabe...this isn't a house, it's our home.

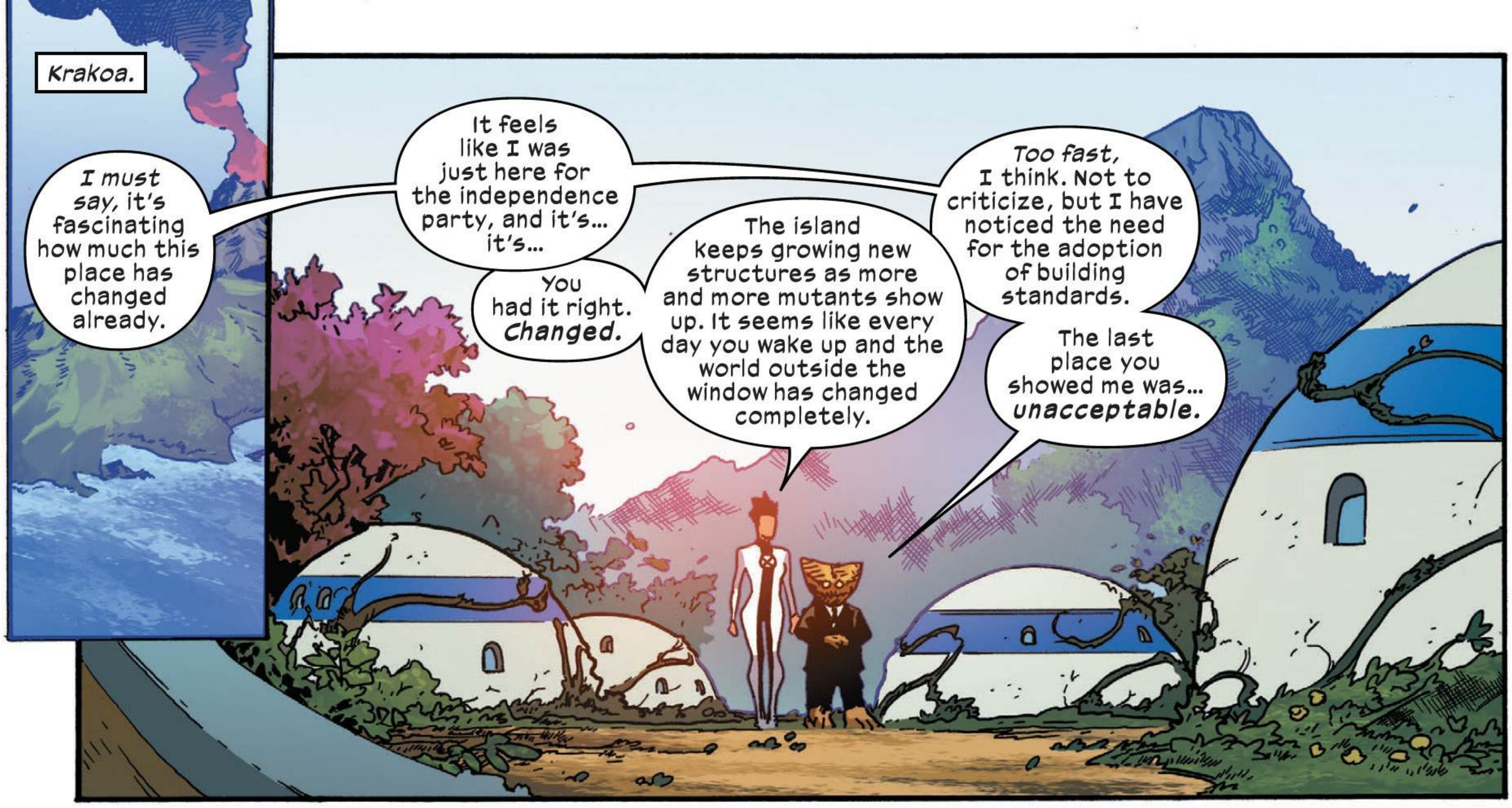
Bad dreams *again?*


*Bad dream.*
The same one every single time...

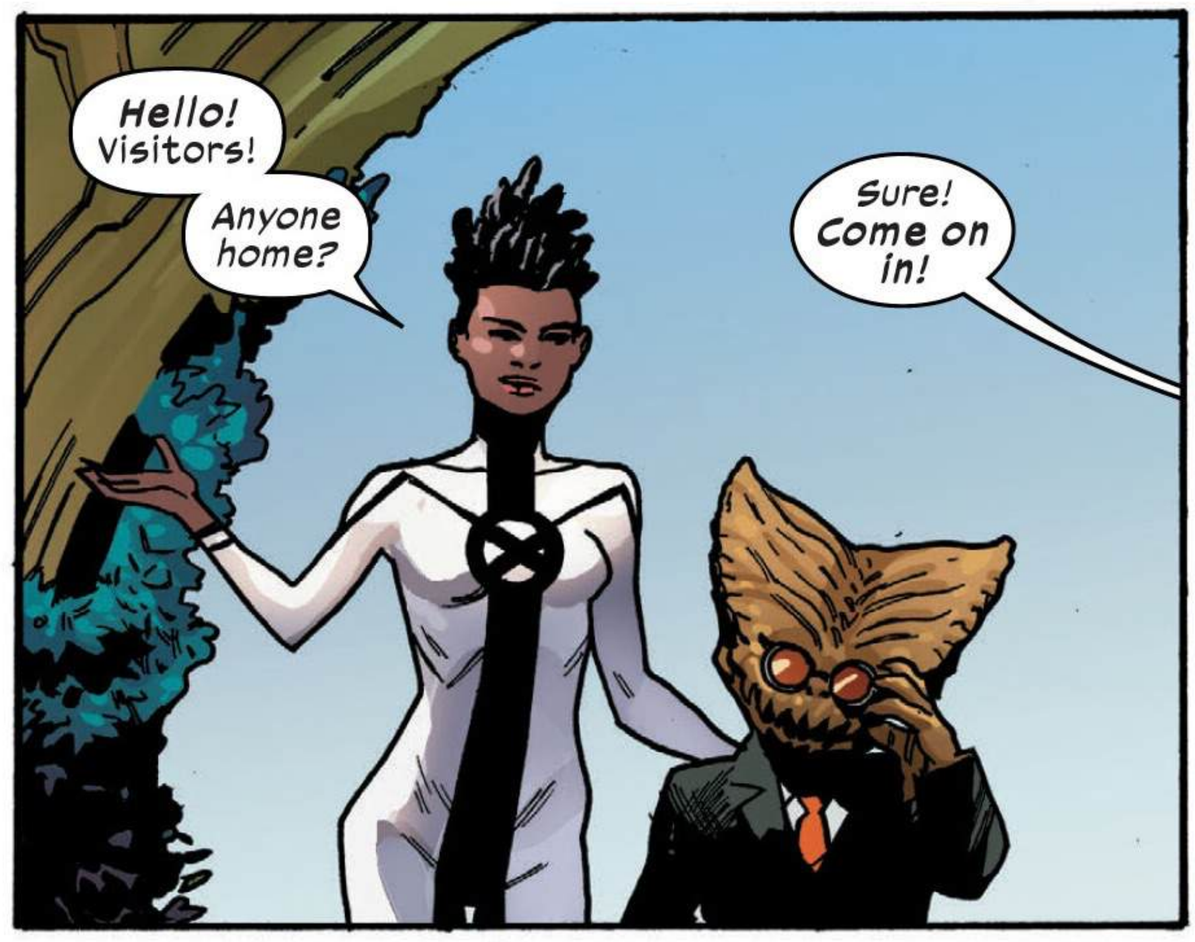

Every single night.

It's all I *remember* from--
*Huh?*

What in the world?


Krakoa.
I must say, it's fascinating how much this place has changed already.
It feels like I was just here for the independence party, and it's... it's...
You had it right. Changed.
The island keeps growing new structures as more and more mutants show up. It seems like every day you wake up and the world outside the window has changed completely.
Too fast, I think. Not to criticize, but I have noticed the need for the adoption of building standards.
The last place you showed me was... unacceptable.

Oh, that's just the Gen X kids. It's how they are. Living like animals...
This'll be better.


Hello! Visitors!
Anyone home?
Sure! Come on in!

Hey, Idie! Hello there, Broo!
Just havin' breakfast... Hungry?
Look at those teeth, Rahne. Of course he's hungry.

Actually, I'm juicing. I'm trying to drop a few --
What are you doing with that?!
With what?
With...

...THAT!
Ah. That's me space booty.
With great cunning and guile, I won it in battle. 'Tis mine, ahn ye can't have it.
I'm not quite sure exactly how to put this, but I'll give it my *best effort:*
*Listen here, you insane, befurred woman! That's a King Egg!*
SO?
SO?
A King Egg disrupts the breeding cycle. A King Egg makes the queens go to war. *More importantly...*
...unless special precautions are taken...a Brood hive can smell a King Egg from a galaxy away.
TOOM

Oh boy.
Well...it looks like it's going to be one of those days.
Magma?
Yes?

"Say hello."
We have to hold them back until reinforcements get here.
Rahne! You and Idie get the younger kids to safety!
NOW!

What's the word, Jean?

The Council *knows.* There are also about 30 telepaths I'm coordinating with. Two strike teams are incoming.

I'm doing what I can to keep everyone calm and orderly, but we're still going to lose people.

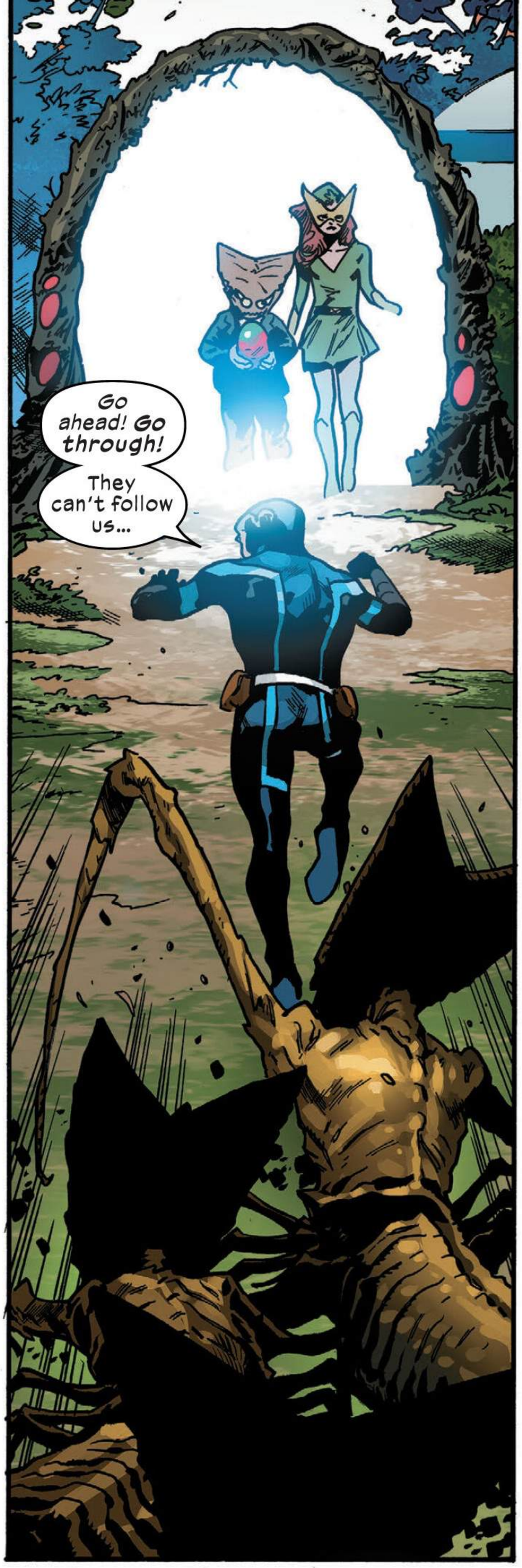
Let me see what I can do about that.

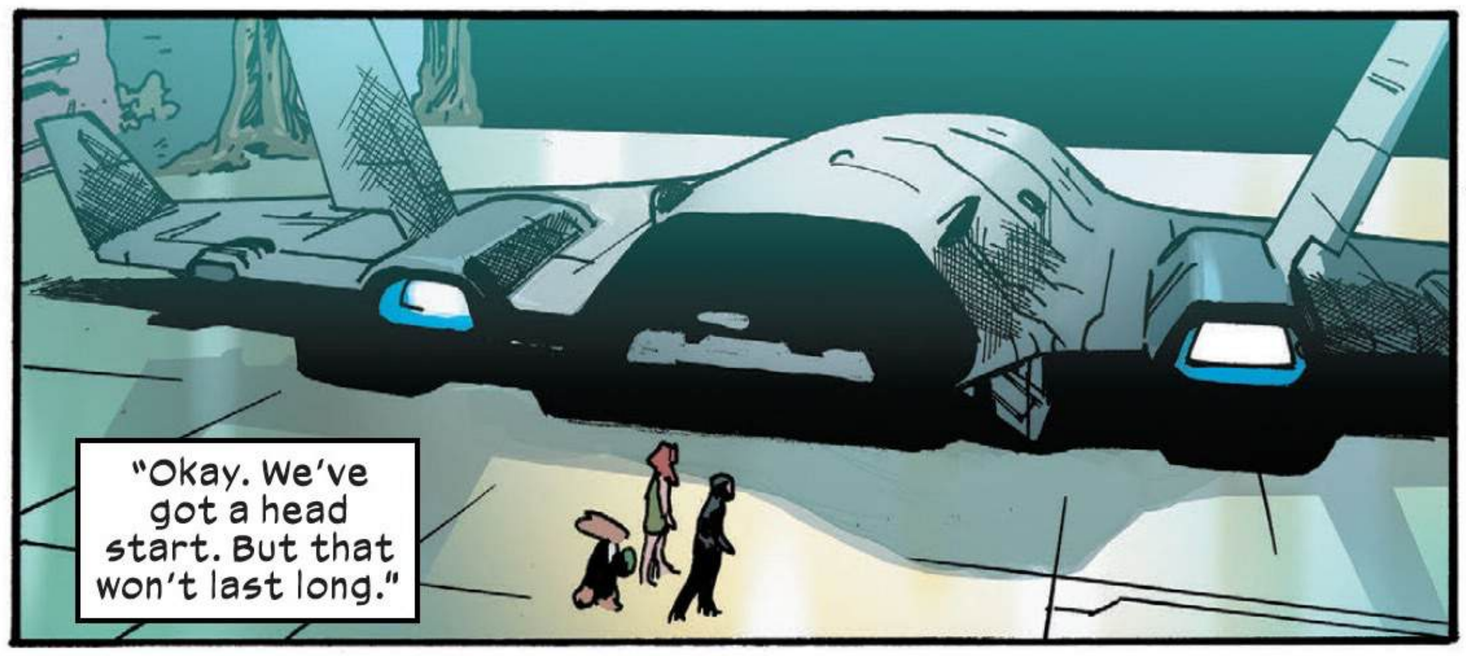
I won't be holding back here, Captain...
"...so careful where you aim."
Always careful, Commander.
Uh, excuse me.
I'm a little busy, Broo. Can this possibly wait?
Uh, not really.
I know why the Brood are here. I know how to stop them.
Well. Now you have my full attention.
Let's hear it.

Scott!
I'm a little busy, Jean. Can this possibly wait?
Uh, not really.
I know why the Brood are here.

They're after an egg that Broo has. The real problem is that even if we push them back, this is just the first wave. They'll keep coming and coming until they get it.
I think we have to get it off-planet.

Understood. We can work with that. Tell Alex to get the ship ready to launch.
I'm on the way.
Jean says we have to get this egg off-world.
So we're going to gateway to the moon and then lead them away from Earth. Can you hold things down here, Captain?

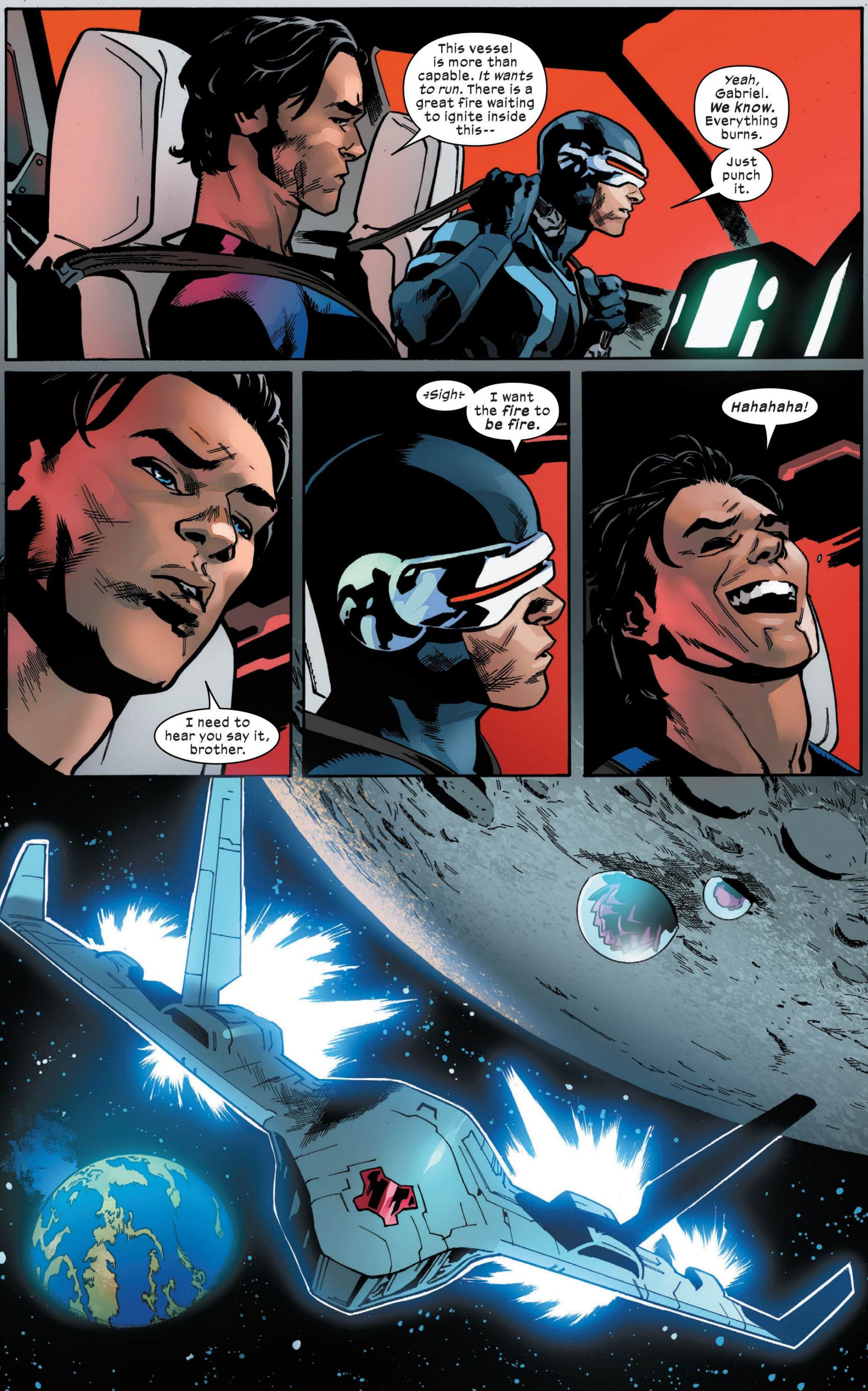

Go ahead! Go through!
They can't follow us...

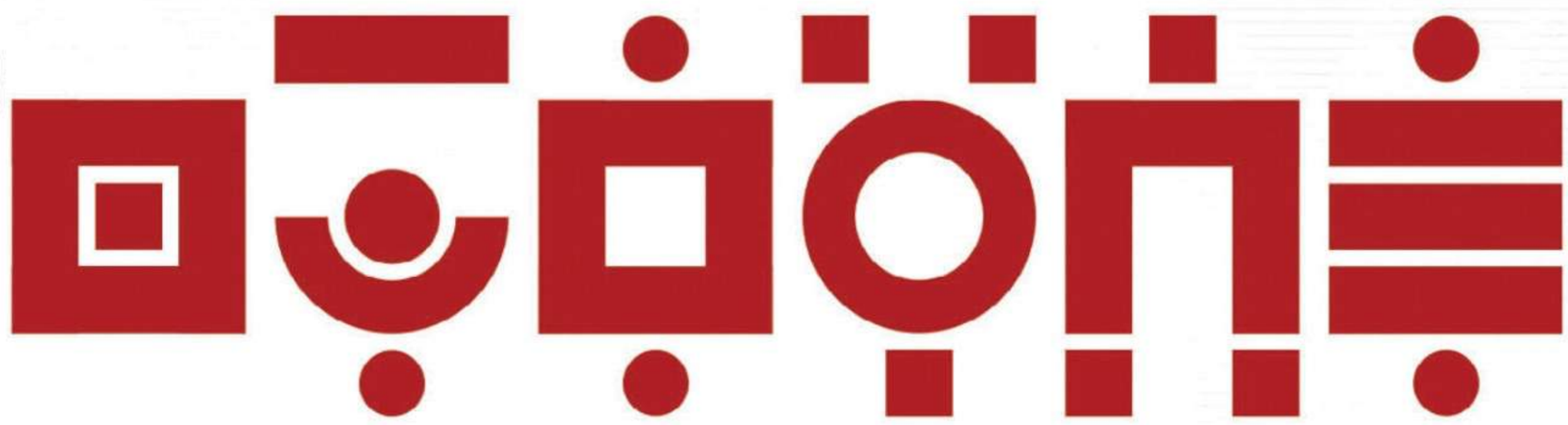

"Okay. We've got a head start. But that won't last long."

We're here! Everyone ready?
Yeah. Gabriel's already on board.

What about Petra and Sway?
I sent them down to the island to fight with the others.
We're good...we can go.

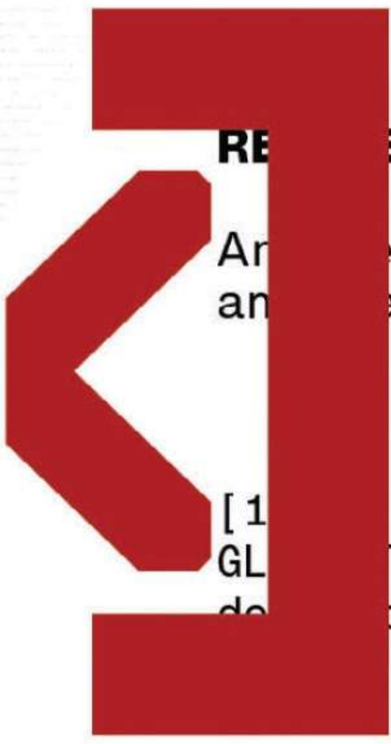
Okay. After we launch, head for the nearest Shi'ar stargate.
Hopefully, we can stay ahead of them.


This vessel is more than capable. *It wants to run.* There is a great fire waiting to ignite inside this--
*Yeah,* Gabriel. ***We know.*** Everything burns.
Just punch it.
I need to hear you say it, brother.
÷Sigh÷
I want the *fire* to *be fire.*
*Hahahaha!*



# SHI'AR BATTLE RECORD





## RE E FAULT

An r-action report of the events surrounding the War of Kings an e death of Lilandra Neramani.

[1
GL OR [Kallark]: Crowned Majestor of the empire after the de or exile of a Neramani heir. Former Superguardian and of the Imperial Guard.

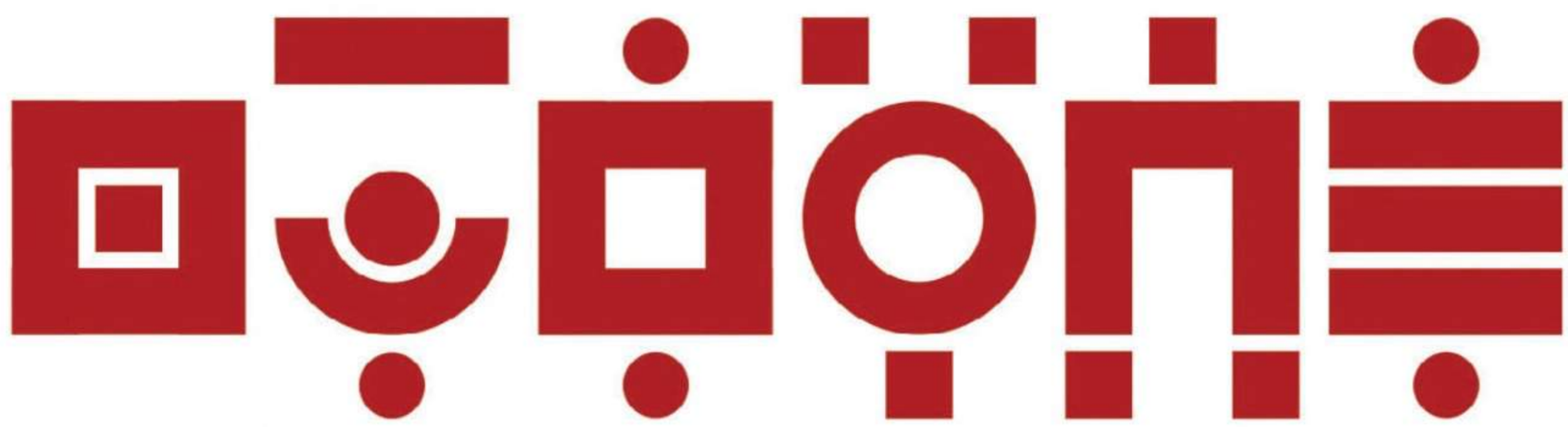
UPDATE: GLADIATOR has recently signaled his desire to surrender the imperial throne to Xandra Neramani, the genetic offspring of Lilandra Neramani and Charles Xavier.

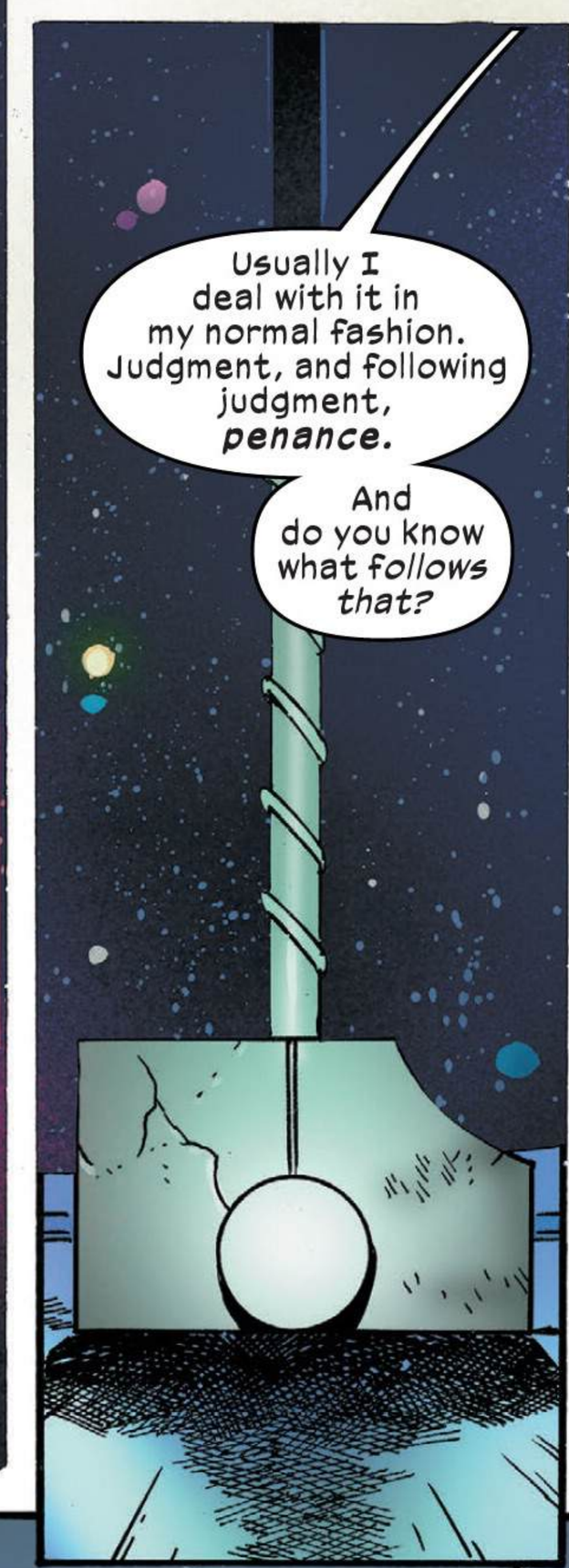
[2]
BLACK BOLT [Blackagar Boltagon]: Killed at the conclusion of the war when a T-bomb detonated, ripping a hole in the fabric of space and time. This anomaly is known as the Fault, and nothing has ever escaped it.

UPDATE: He does not speak, so no one knows exactly how BLACK BOLT escaped from the Fault. Some say he died and returned as the MIDNIGHT KING. Others know better and understand the power of genetic prophecy. The will of a celestial messiah cannot be denied.

[3]
VULCAN [Gabriel Summers]: Also killed at the conclusion of the war when the T-bomb detonated. VULCAN was also believed to have perished in the Fault.

UPDATE: VULCAN never died.





But here--today--I cannot abide the simple realities of failure.

Judgment is not enough.

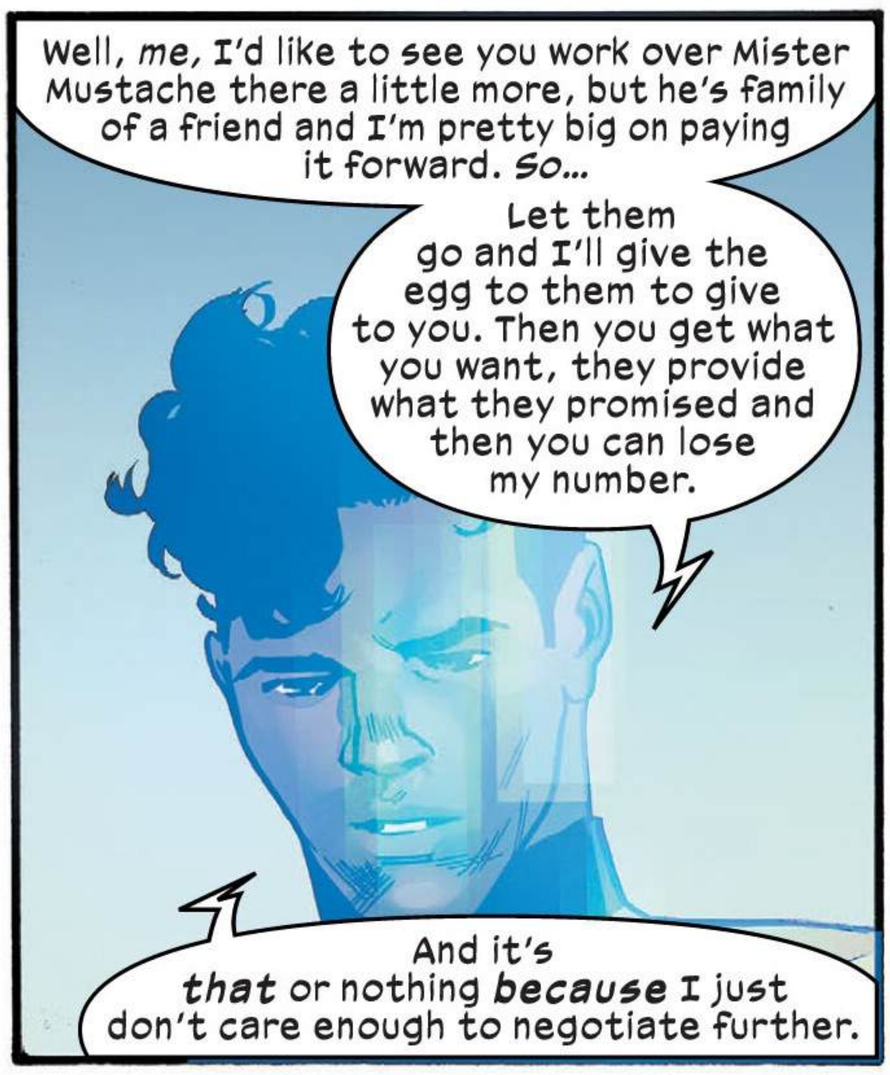
I was promised the King Egg.

And these prisoners have told me you took it.

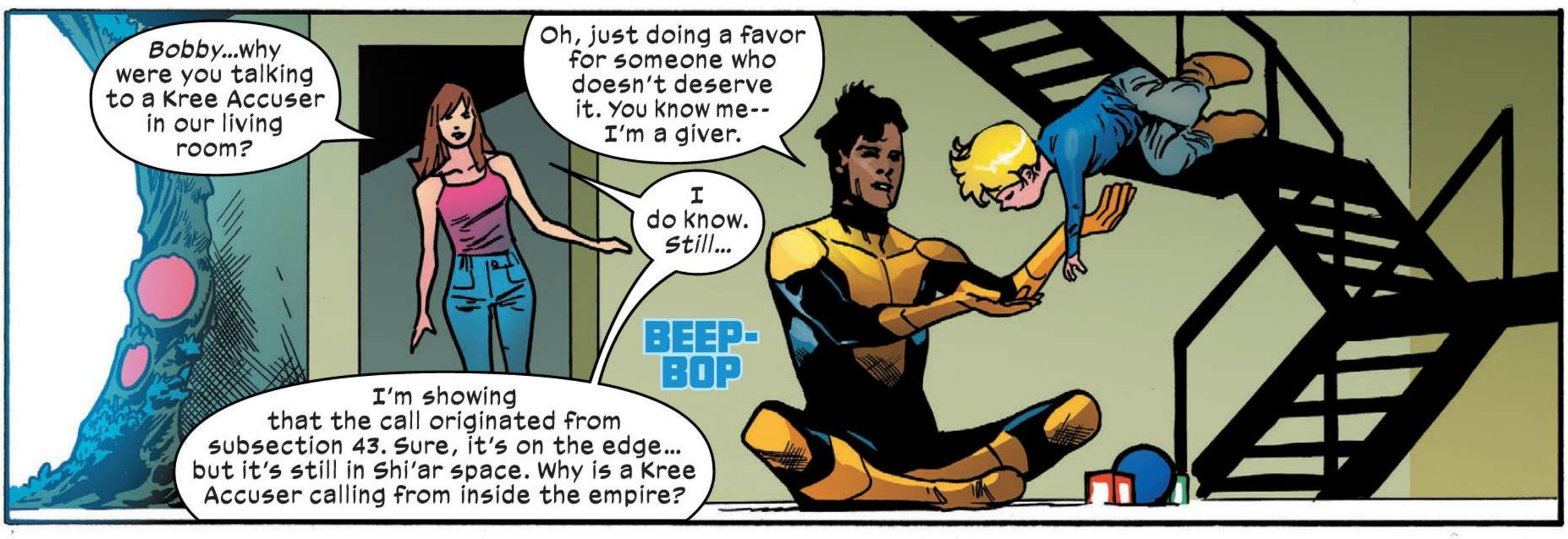
Where is it?
Wow. You really beat the hell out of those guys.
Can't say I'm surprised. They usually have it coming. And, *you know,* now that I think about it, I kinda dig you, man. ***Good work.*** Way to put your back into it.
But I don't have your egg. *Sorry.*
But you ***do know*** where it is?

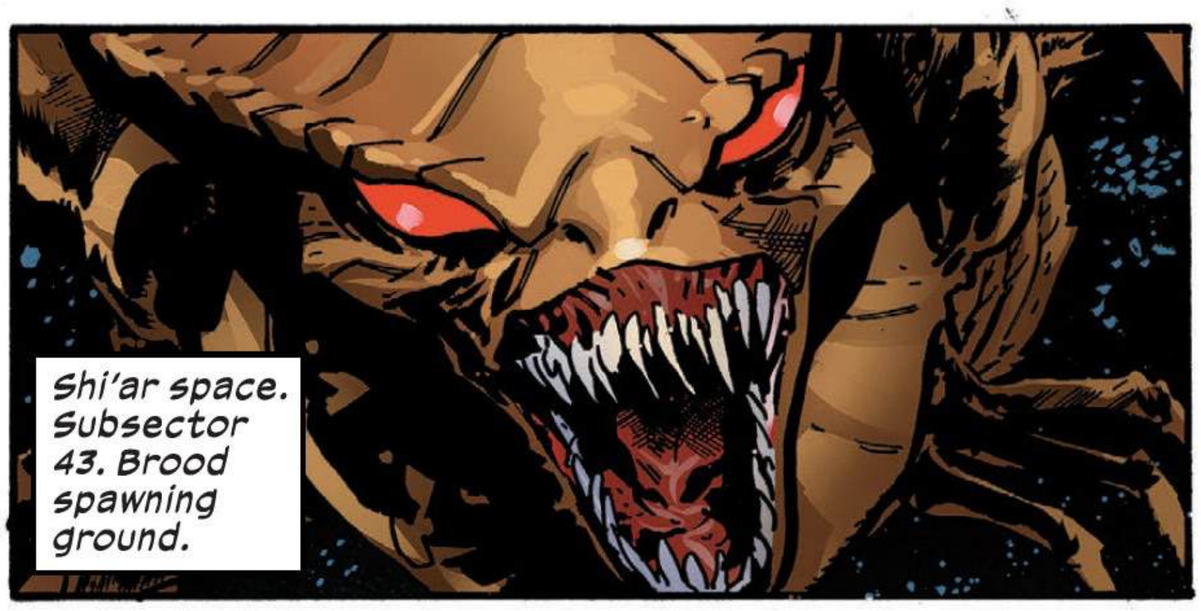
Let's just say I have a pretty good idea of where to find it. Maybe I make a call, things could be set in motion, you could end this whole thing a happy man.
But I gotta ask, *what's in it for me?*

*What do you want?*


Well, *me,* I'd like to see you work over Mister Mustache there a little more, but he's family of a friend and I'm pretty big on paying it forward. *So...*
Let them go and I'll give the egg to them to give to you. Then you get what you want, they provide what they promised and then you can lose my number.
And it's ***that*** or nothing ***because*** I just don't care enough to negotiate further.

...
I accept.
Of course you do.
BE-DOOP


*Bobby...*why were you talking to a Kree Accuser in our living room?
Oh, just doing a favor for someone who doesn't deserve it. You know me-- I'm a giver.
I do know. *Still...*
BEEP-BOP
I'm showing that the call originated from subsection 43. Sure, it's on the edge... but it's still in Shi'ar space. Why is a Kree Accuser calling from inside the empire?



Did you see that? That--*Dad*--is how you keep the peace on the frontier.

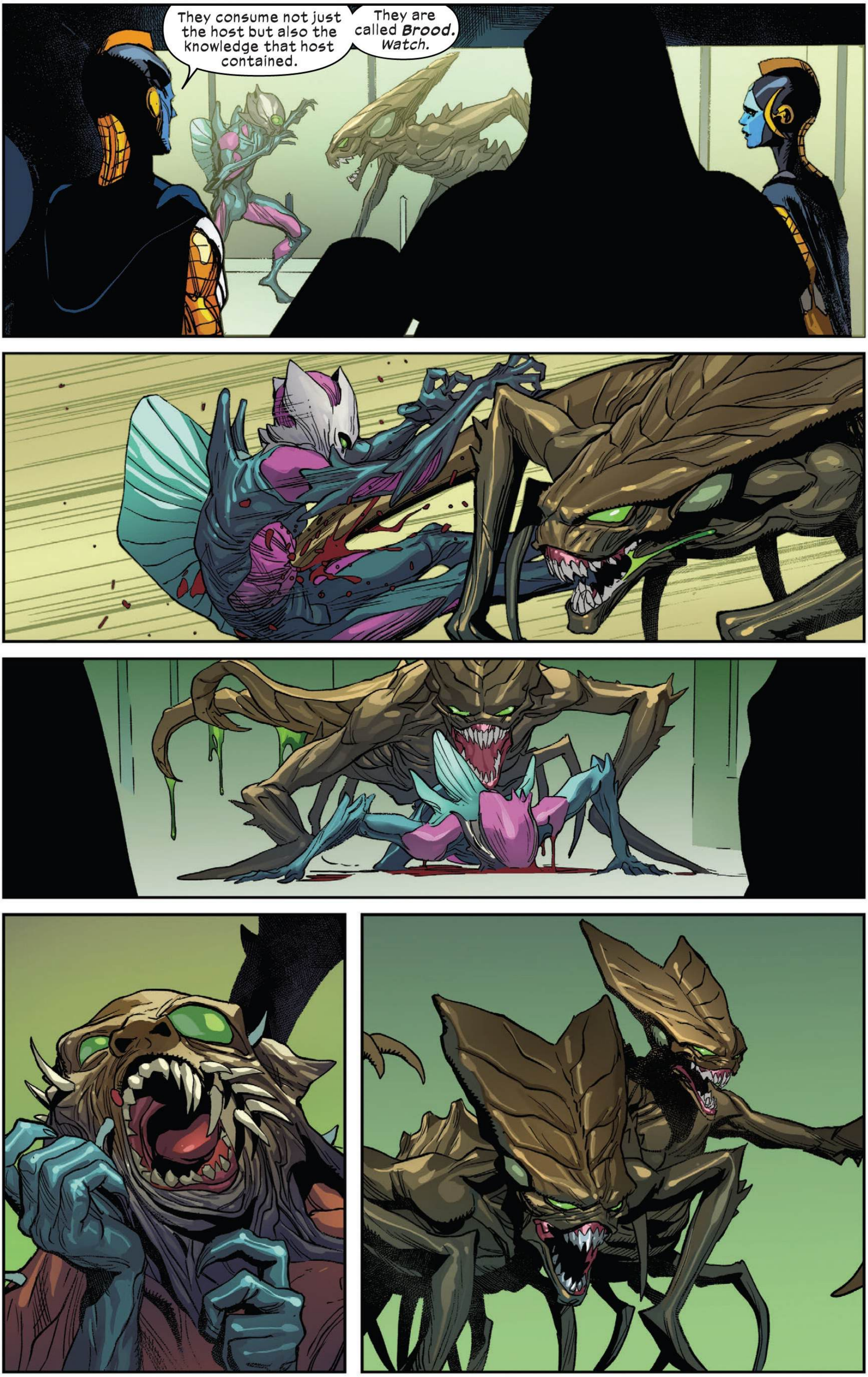
It was an excellent shot, Kubark. *Well done.*

AFTER DREW

# The King Egg

# 10

Then.
Hala.
The Kree Empire.
Where did you find them?
Spawning in the dark matter flow of a collapsed universe.
They were discovered by a remote team of imperial xenotomologists. They observed that the hive began to mimic and then adapt to their behavior.
Not abnormal, but worth a *closer look.*
It was only after they realized that the creatures were luring, trapping and parasitically consuming members of the team that they understood they were dealing with an *ancient, highly adaptive, aggressive species.*
And so it was brought to our attention, and from us, the information flowed to you.
Adaptive how?


They consume not just the host but also the knowledge that host contained.
They are called *Brood*. *Watch*.

Fascinating.
Structure?

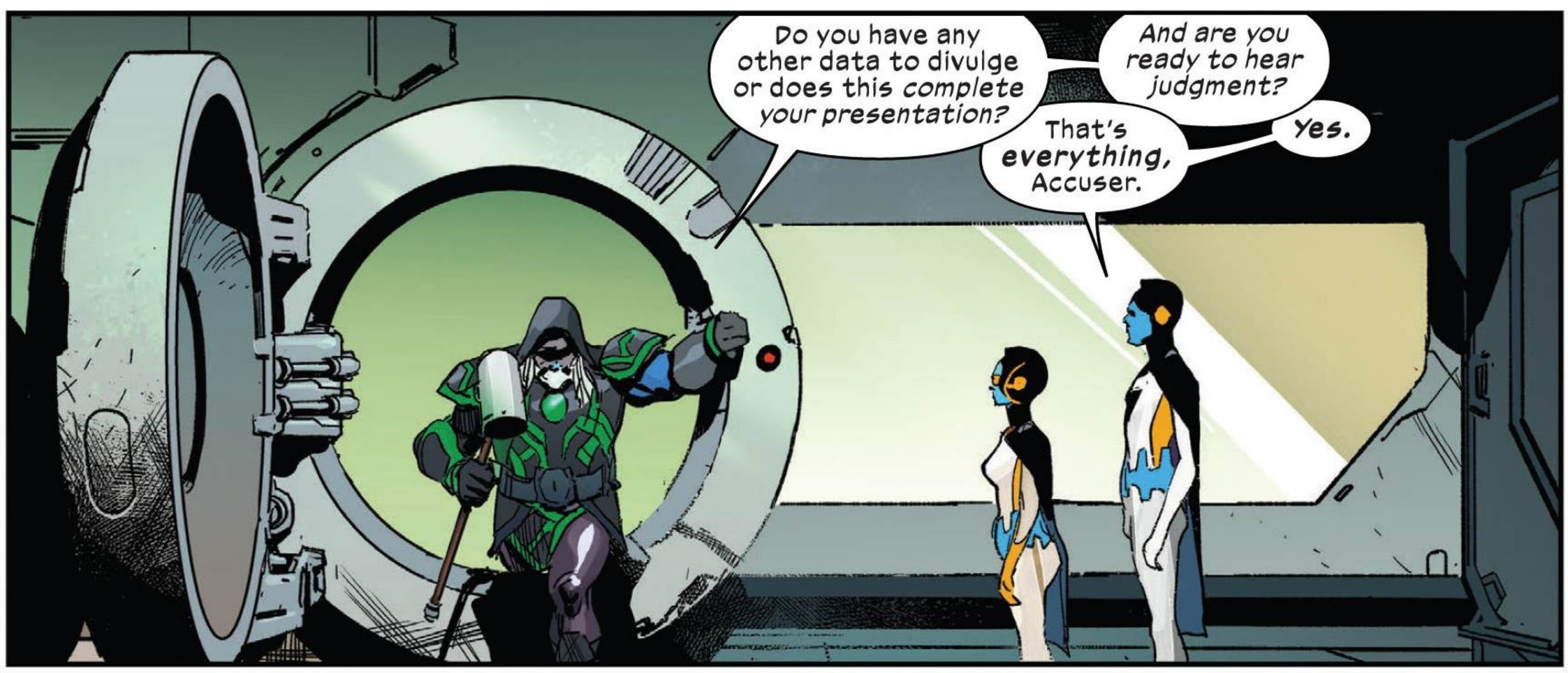
They're matriarchal, like many rapidly reproductive hive societies.
Tell me what you *propose.*

We want to genetically seed the hive with a *biological control mechanism.*

Left to its own volition, the hive will evolve along a predictable--*and seasonal*--path of *factional queens* and *dueling hives.*
We want to produce a patriarchal element that--*when introduced to the hive*--will seize control of the entire society and turn them into a ***weapon*** to ***disrupt*** rival advanced civilizations.

And what do you call this?

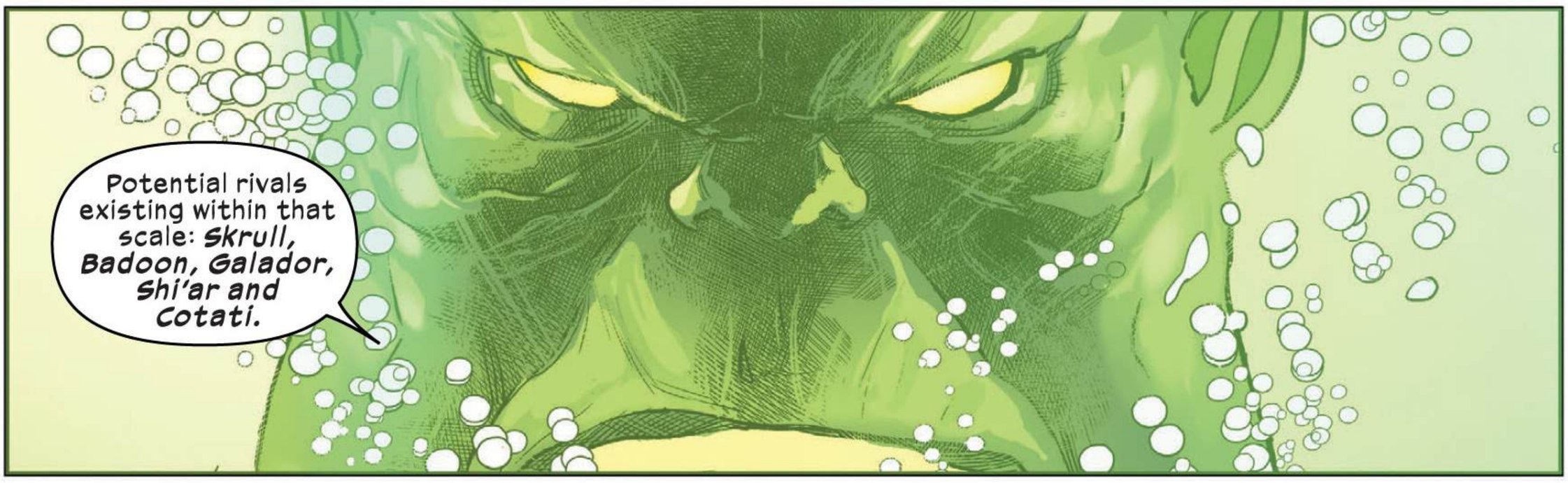
A King Egg.

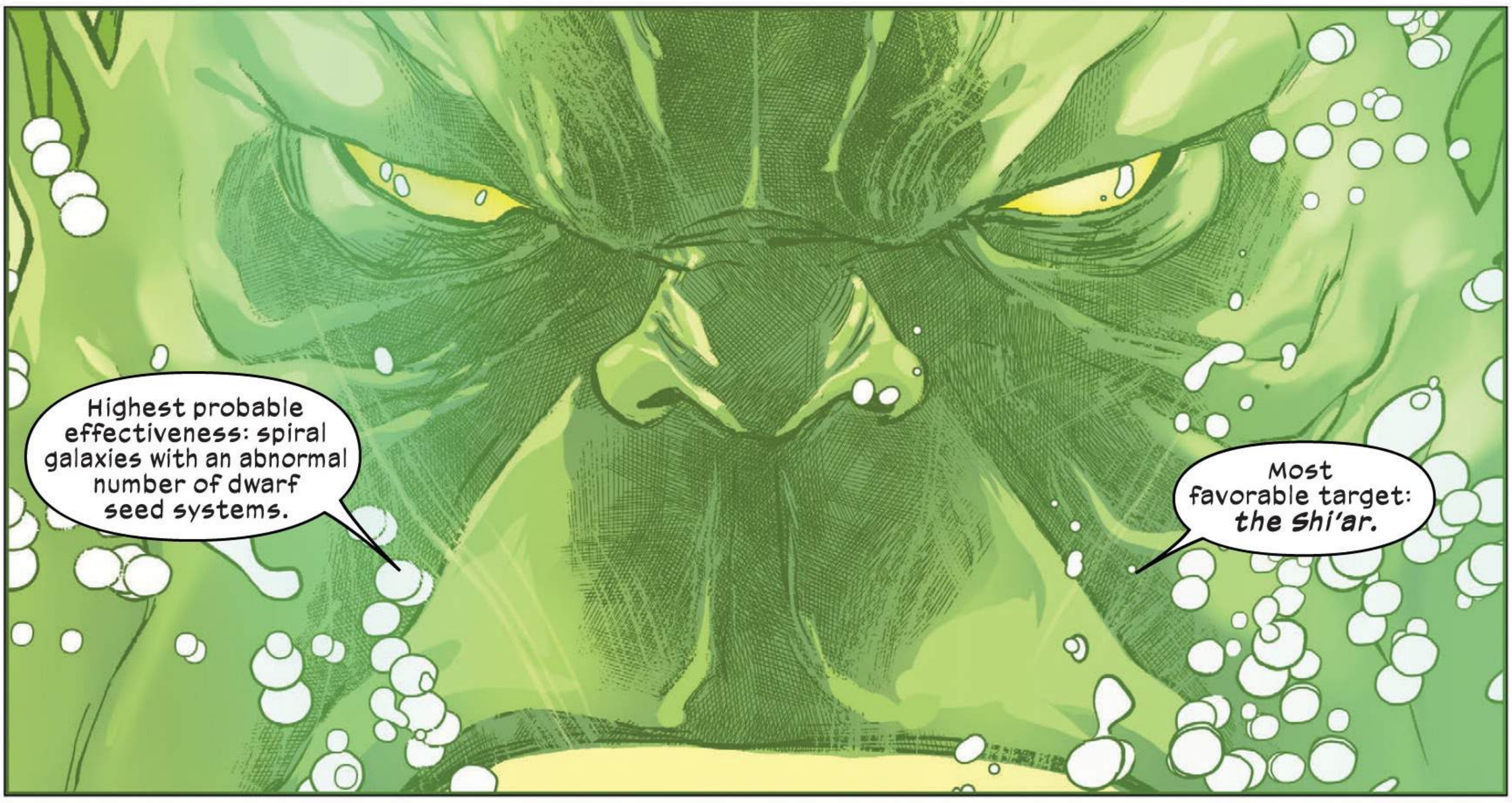

Do you have any other data to divulge or does this complete your presentation?
And are you ready to hear judgment?
That's everything, Accuser.
Yes.

And so it falls to you, Supremor.
What say you? Is this a weapon worth building?

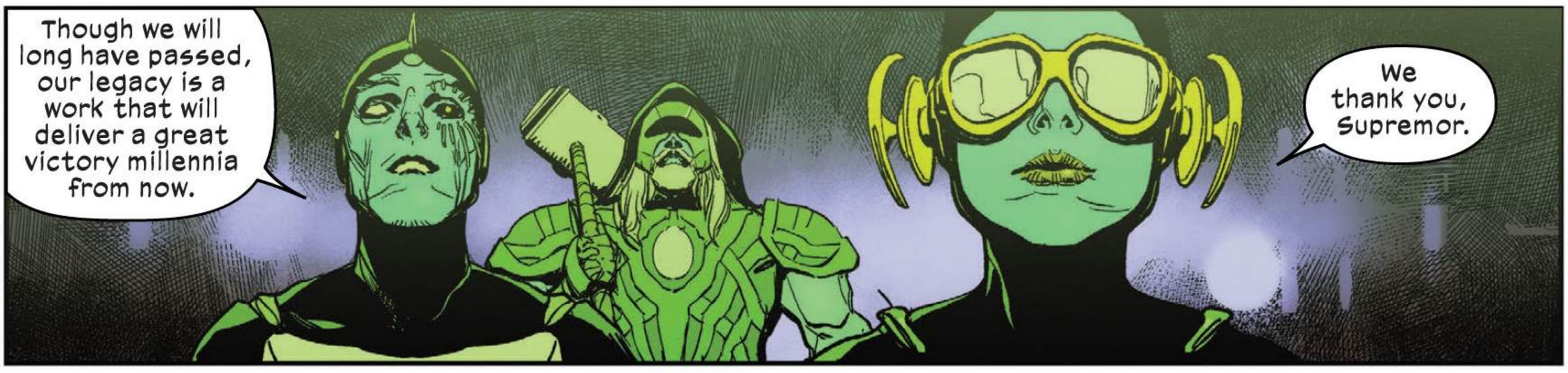
The usefulness of any weapon requires a target against which to be judged.
Extrapolating...

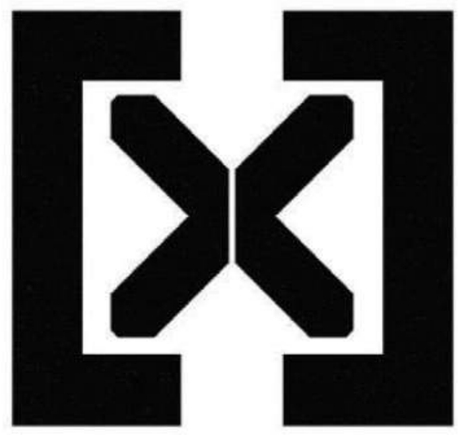
Considering the viral nature of the hive society--*and also the limiting nature of its singular replication model*--we project a timeline of ***no less*** than ***eight millennia*** for a hive society possessing sufficient volume and intelligence to topple a rival empire.


Potential rivals existing within that scale: ***Skrull, Badoon, Galador, Shi'ar and Cotati.***


Highest probable effectiveness: spiral galaxies with an abnormal number of dwarf seed systems.
Most favorable target: ***the Shi'ar.***

***Weapon... approved.***


Though we will long have passed, our legacy is a work that will deliver a great victory millennia from now.
We thank you, Supremor.



[kra_[0.9]
[koa_[0.9]

[kra_[0.X]
[koa_[0.X]

# THE KING EGG

The New Mutants brought a King Egg home from space -- unfortunately, the King Egg brings with it trillions of hungry Brood. Now the X-Men have taken the King Egg off Earth, but the Brood aren't the only ones after it. A Kree Accuser took the Starjammers hostage, holding them in exchange for information...and unwittingly exposing his presence in Shi'ar space. Now Gladiator, Kid Gladiator and the Imperial Guard are after him. And everyone's about to run into one another. Let's see how this goes...

Vulcan

Cyclops

Havok

Broo

Jean Grey

Corsair

Hepzibah

Raza

Ch'od

Gladiator

Kid Gladiator

Manta

Oracle

Sunspot

Cannonball

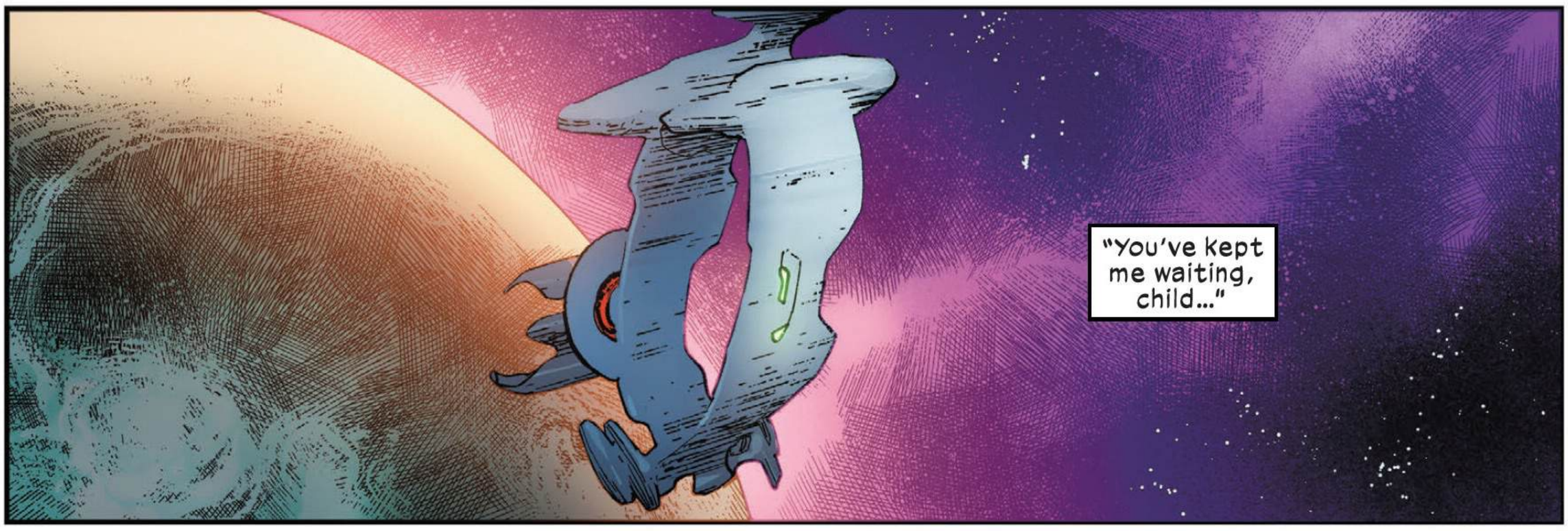
[kra_[0.9]...]
[koa_[0.9]...]

[A._New_World]

They're *gaining* on us.

I don't think we can stay ahead of them *much longer.*

"Well...that's not good. At all."

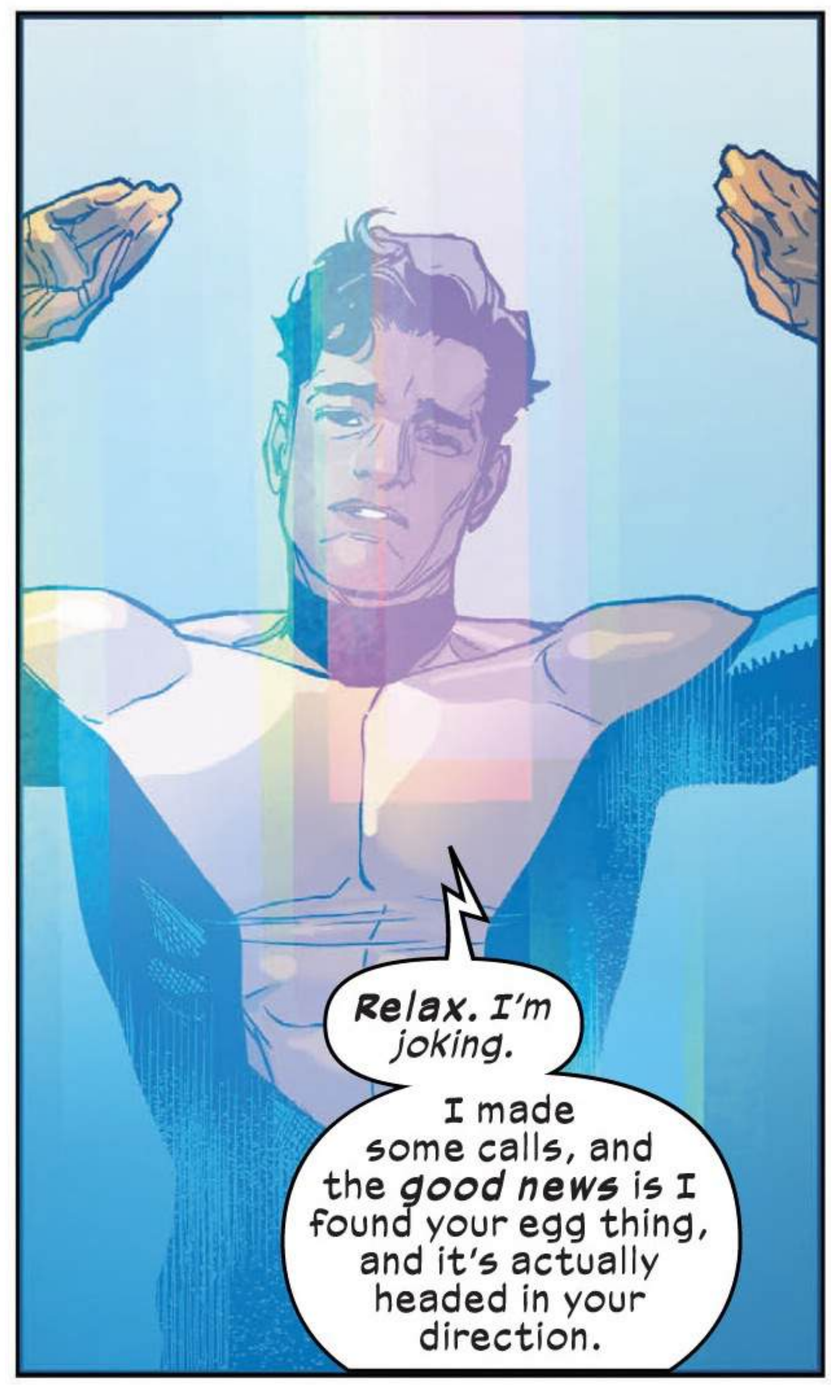

"You've kept me waiting, child..."

...there's a cost associated with that. For either you pay...

...or your confidants do.
Where is the King Egg?

Okay. So...you're gonna be mad--*maybe not as mad as your captives there*--but mad nonetheless. Anyway, *here it goes...*
I totally forgot about the egg thing. Completely slipped my mind.
What happened was Sam and I started watching the Shi'ar version of *Jeopardy* and, gotta tell you, we did not know any of the answers. It was *very frustrating.*

*Da Costa... when I get my hands on you...*


***Relax.*** *I'm joking.*
I made some calls, and the ***good news*** is I found your egg thing, and it's actually headed in your direction.

WHU-THUMPP!
Hala's great halls of mercy...
We're being boarded.

The bad news is Sam's wife tracked you and you've got something else coming your way.
Bang. Bang. Dummies.

SWAAAHH

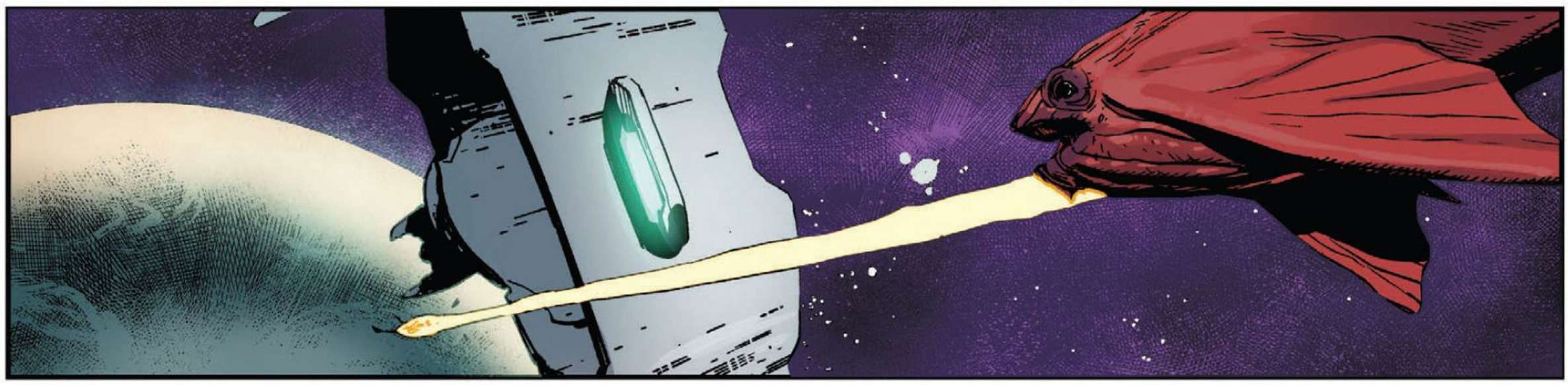
It seems you are lost, Accuser.
This is Shi'ar space, and we are a people free of Kree judgment.

All will be judged, Majestor.
For this is a righteous, millennial work I am engaged in. That one such as you should fall in its doing only makes it more so.

Hey, Dad?
Yes?

You know how you're always busy running the empire, and you promised this would be some uninterrupted me-and-you time? *Without any imperial nonsense?*
*I do.*
*Well,* I'll forgive you if you #$*@ this guy up for me.

CHOMP!
Can't hold it. We're going down.
It looks like we have two choices. That station or the planetoid it's orbiting.
Head for the planet. Bigger canvas to work with...
...and that station's gonna get chewed up by the Brood in our wake. Alex?
On it.
To the unidentified station we're approaching.
If you can, you need to evacuate immediately-- there's a Brood swarm on our--
Dad? What the--
I know it's not the reunion you were expecting, son...but we can catch up later.
Right now I need to know if you happen to have a Brood King Egg on you.
We do.
Ah, so that's what this is about. A King Egg. Now I understand.
Are you landing on the planet below?
Landing?
"Not likely."

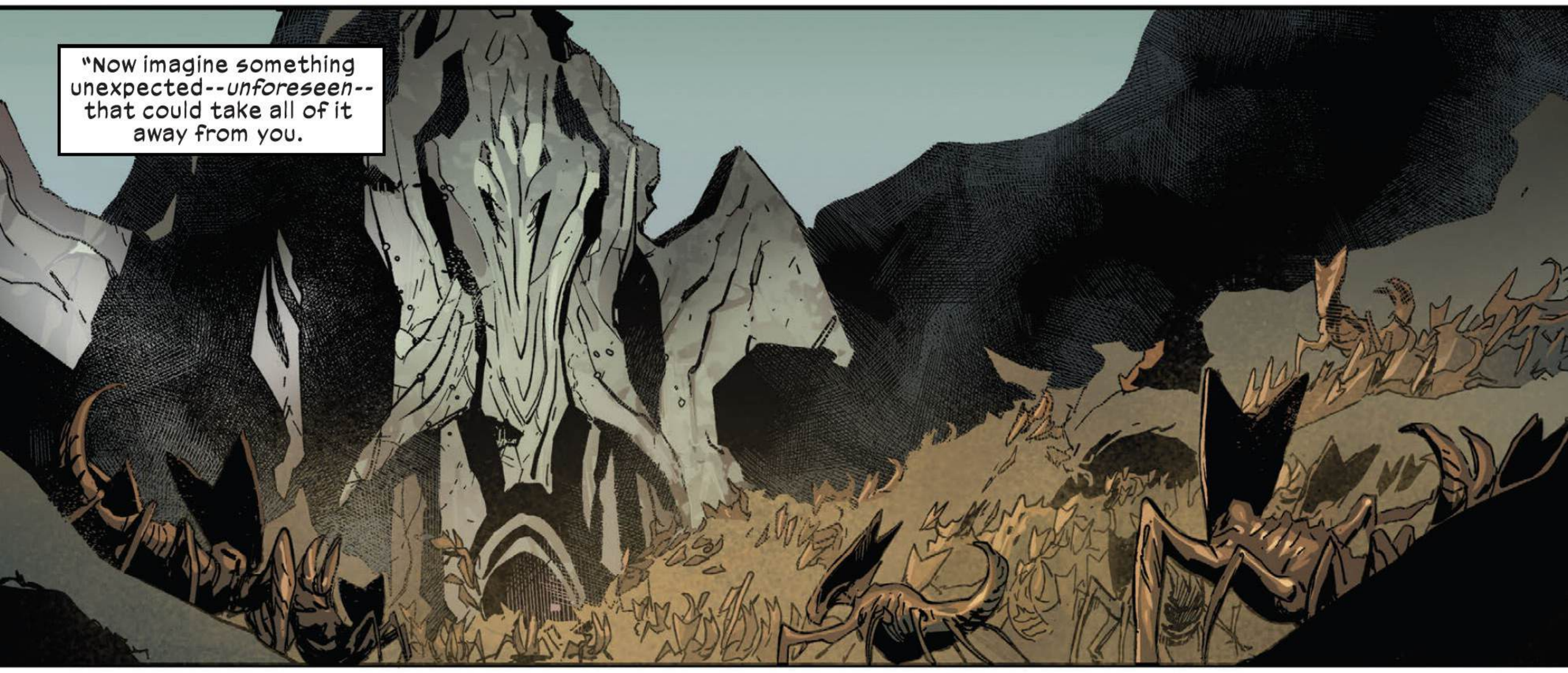


This way!

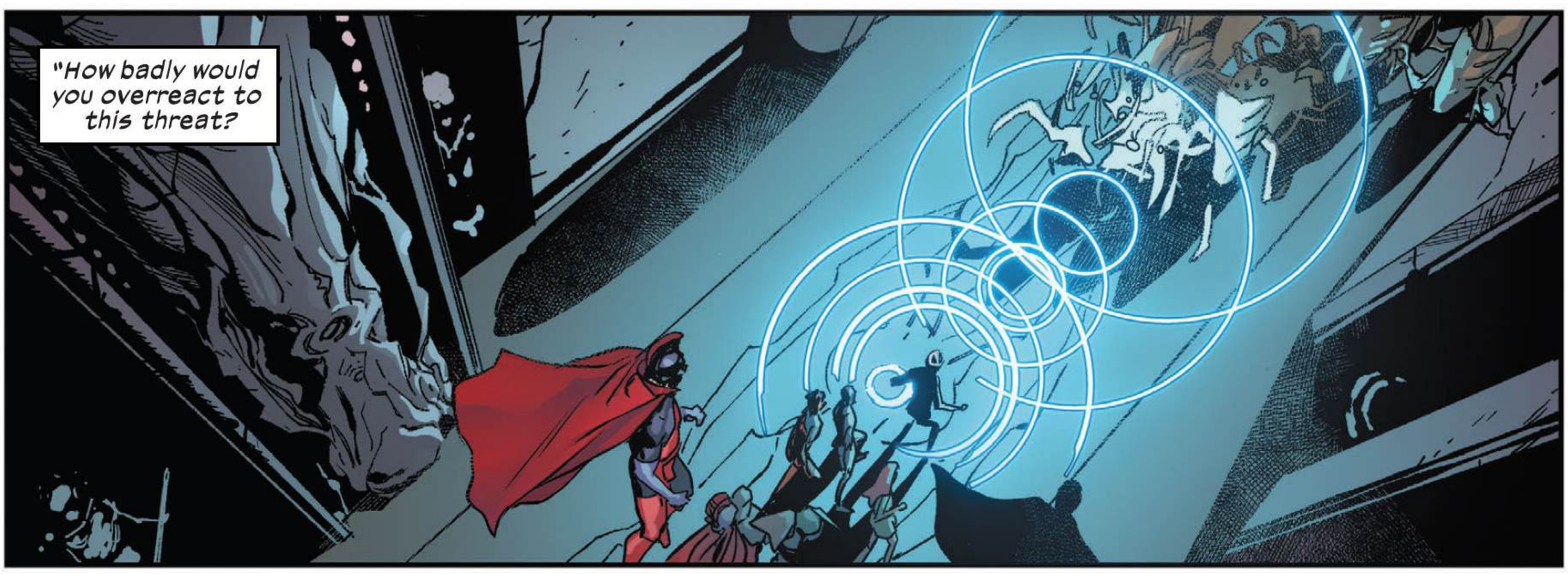
Can you get through to them?
No. Their thoughts are manic--madness--driven by the fear of their queens.

"Scott, you need to imagine the control each of these queens must have.
"It must be absolute. Total.

"Imagine living your entire life as a *predator*--*hunting whatever you felt needed to be hunted.*
"*Consuming* whatever you desired to *consume.*
"Just consider what it would be like having millions of your species--*millions of your race*--willing to die just so you could have more than what you already had.
"Consider the *appetite* of it... the *power* of it.
"Try to imagine what that must *feel like.*


"Now imagine something unexpected--*unforeseen*--that could take all of it away from you.

"And worse than that...it would turn you into that which you have lorded over for thousands of years: a ***drone.***


*"How badly would you overreact to this threat?*

*"How badly would you want that threat to die?*

"These queens would sacrifice *everything* to hold on to their power.

"That's the threat the King Egg is...
"They will kill *everything* that stands in between them and the King Egg.
"Everything."
Scott! Look out!
SCOTT!

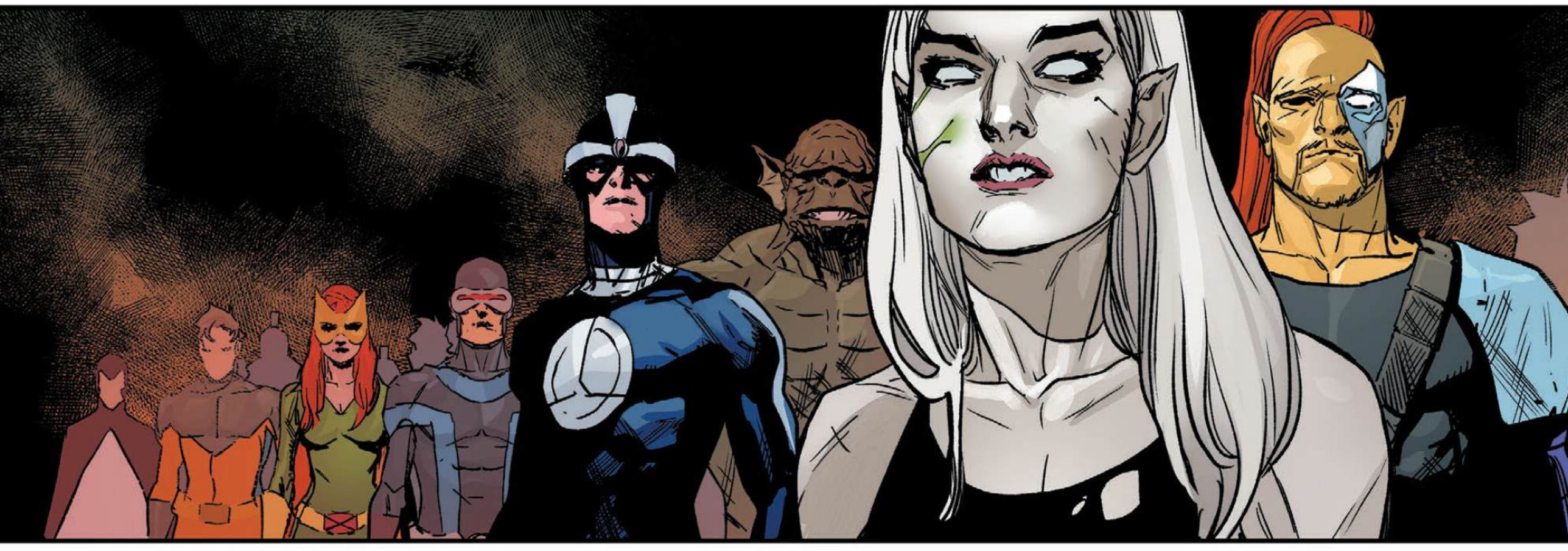
What's-- what's going on?

They just stopped.
They've lost their fire.

Whatever. I'll take a win any way we can get it.

No. This isn't a win. The Brood are a hive mind with a singular goal. This is something larger.
This shouldn't be happening.

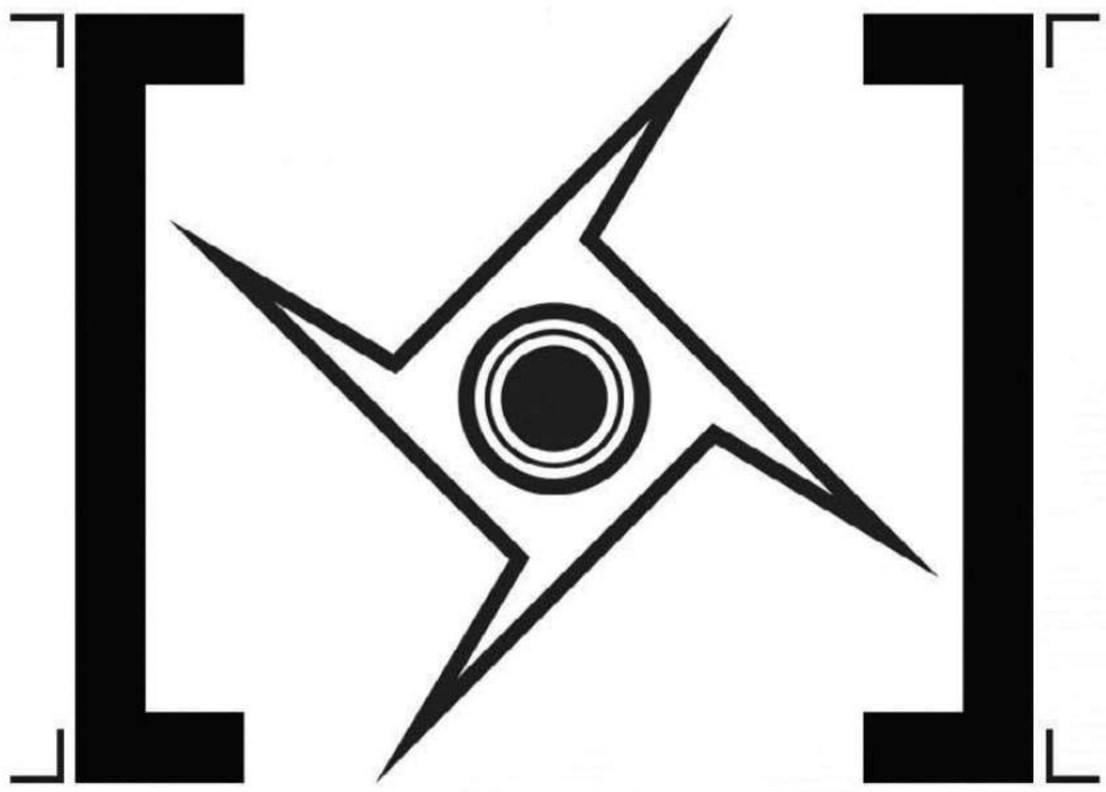
No, it shouldn't.
Where the hell's that egg?



A *spawning ground.* For *predators.* For parasites. For ***Brood.***

Ten thousand *worlds.* Six trillion *drones.* One thousand ***queens.***

And now... ***one king.***



# THE EYES OF THE SUPREMOR

***RE: A report from the secret order of Black Judges regarding the creation of a weaponized slave catalyst for hive species.***

**POTENTIAL SEED SPECIES:**

- Tal Ba-Rii.....[failure from process : extinct]
- Sidri.....[failure from mind structure]
- Scatter.....[success : minor]
- Phalanx.....[failure from adaptivity]
- Gu'Knoiss.....[failure from biological integrity : extinct]
- Brood.....[success : major]

**BROOD**

Regarded as this universe's first galactic predators, the Brood entered this reality through the dark matter flow of a collapsing universe. Being extra-universal, little is known about the origins of the alpha hive, but close study implies manufacture. This presents several injection complications based on species design.

The Brood have a matriarchal caste system, which is structured as follows: **Empress > Firstborn > Queen > Dwarf Queen > Drone.**

Careful study and beta testing of slave catalyst has resulted in the conclusion that a pheromone-based solution works best for total control, but species design means that it can only be injected at the Queen level of the hive.

That the entire militaristic class of Firstborn dies when the Empress does means that our weapon system can only be introduced at the death [or extermination] of the Brood Empress. After such an event [the death of an Empress], the nest wars between rival queens to determine who will assume control of the hive usually last several decades, giving us ample time to exercise the use of our weapon.

**[NOTE: During the nest wars that determine the new Empress, the population of the entire Brood hive drops dramatically, so it is best used at the onset of succession.]**

# THE KING EGG

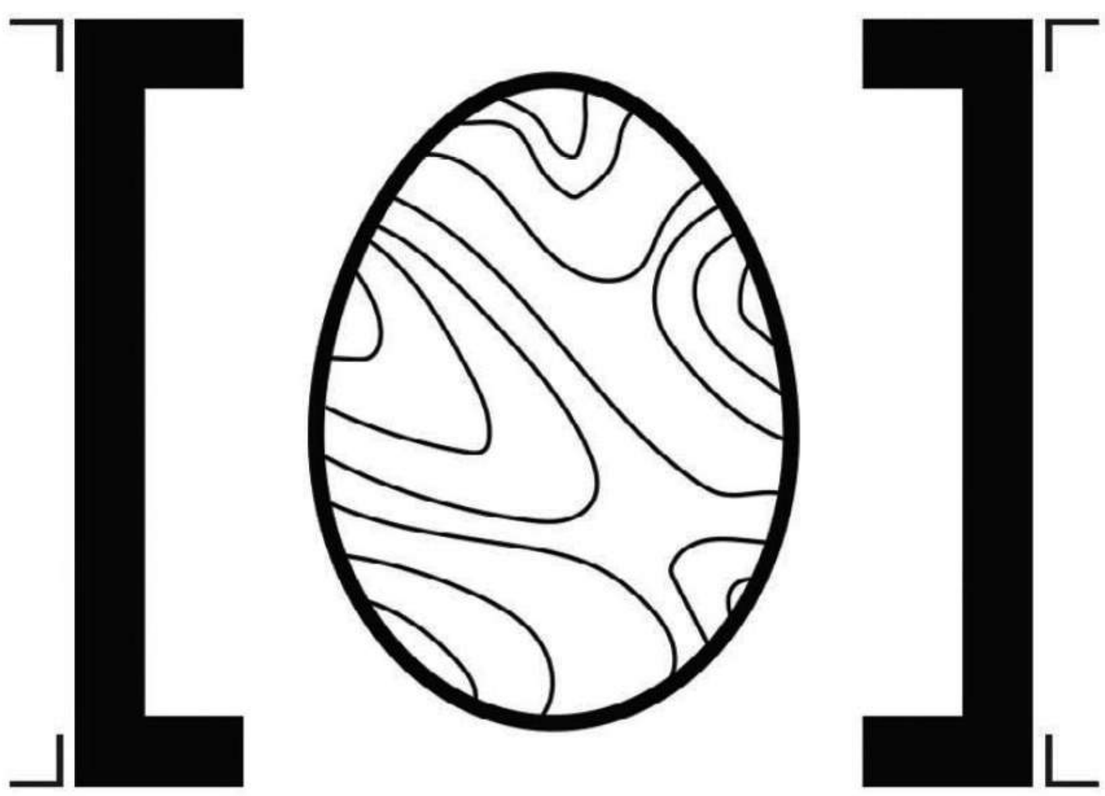
After several hundred years of testing and design, the Black Judges [the secret science wing of the Accusers] presented the Supreme Intelligence with a pheromone-based weapon built to hack the Brood caste system and seize control of the hive by reproducing and supercharging the pheromonal Empress effect.

**[NOTE: Normally, the Empress controls the hive through a combination of pheromones and telepathic dominance. Out of necessity, our weapon supercharges the first since we cannot effectively replicate the second. The effect of this is a more compliant but less autonomous drone.]**

The King Egg itself is a container for a serum that alters and enhances the biology of the King Egg host and will give the host control of the entire hive for an estimated 5-10 standard Kree cycles. The King Egg is activated by ingesting the serum contained inside the shell.

**[NOTE: Production of a rival King Egg can disrupt the host's control of the hive.]**

[Supremor..[_si]_01]
[1000 WI..[_si]_05]



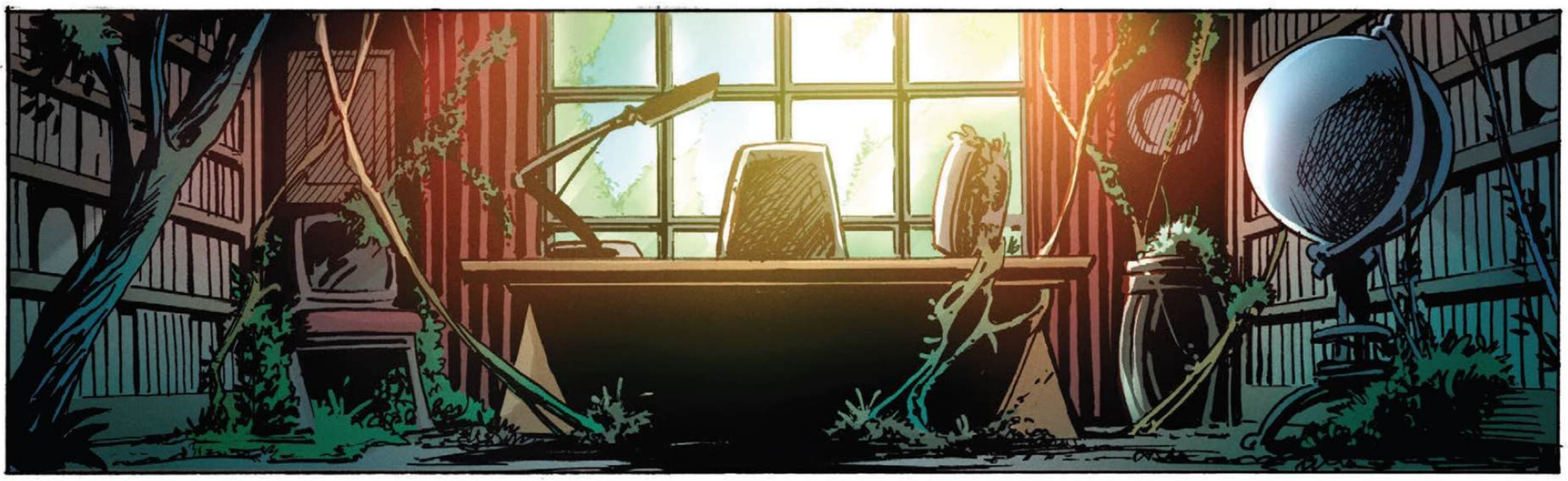
[KING].....[EGG]
[ver.....314_3]

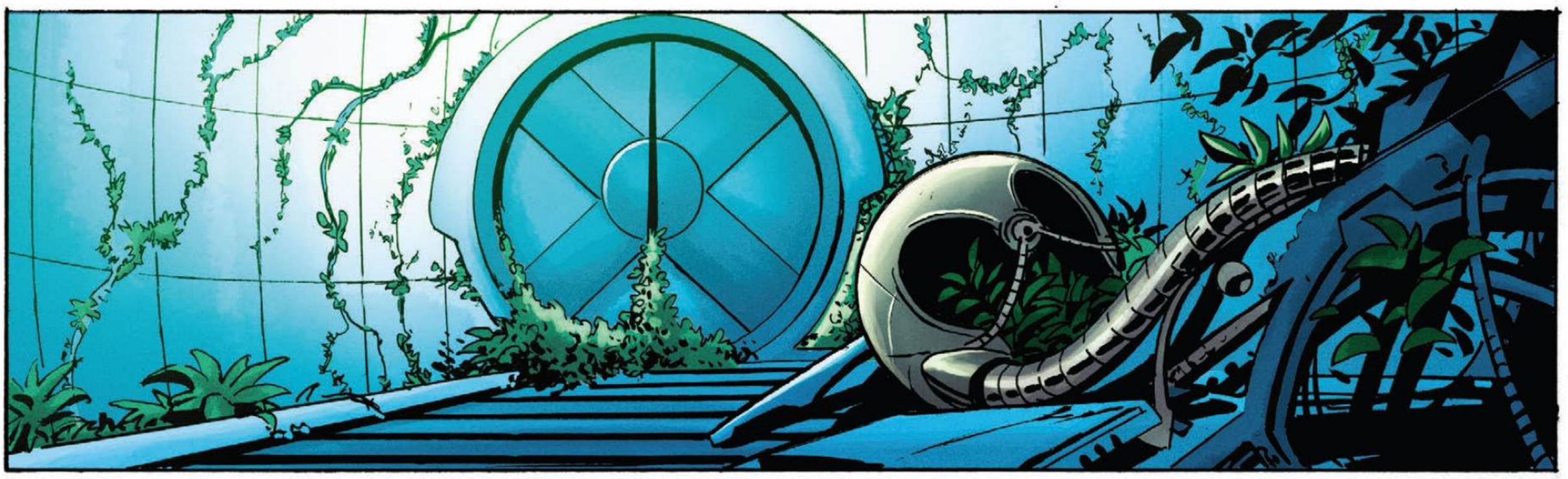
Chapter 11

# Haunted Mansion

# 11

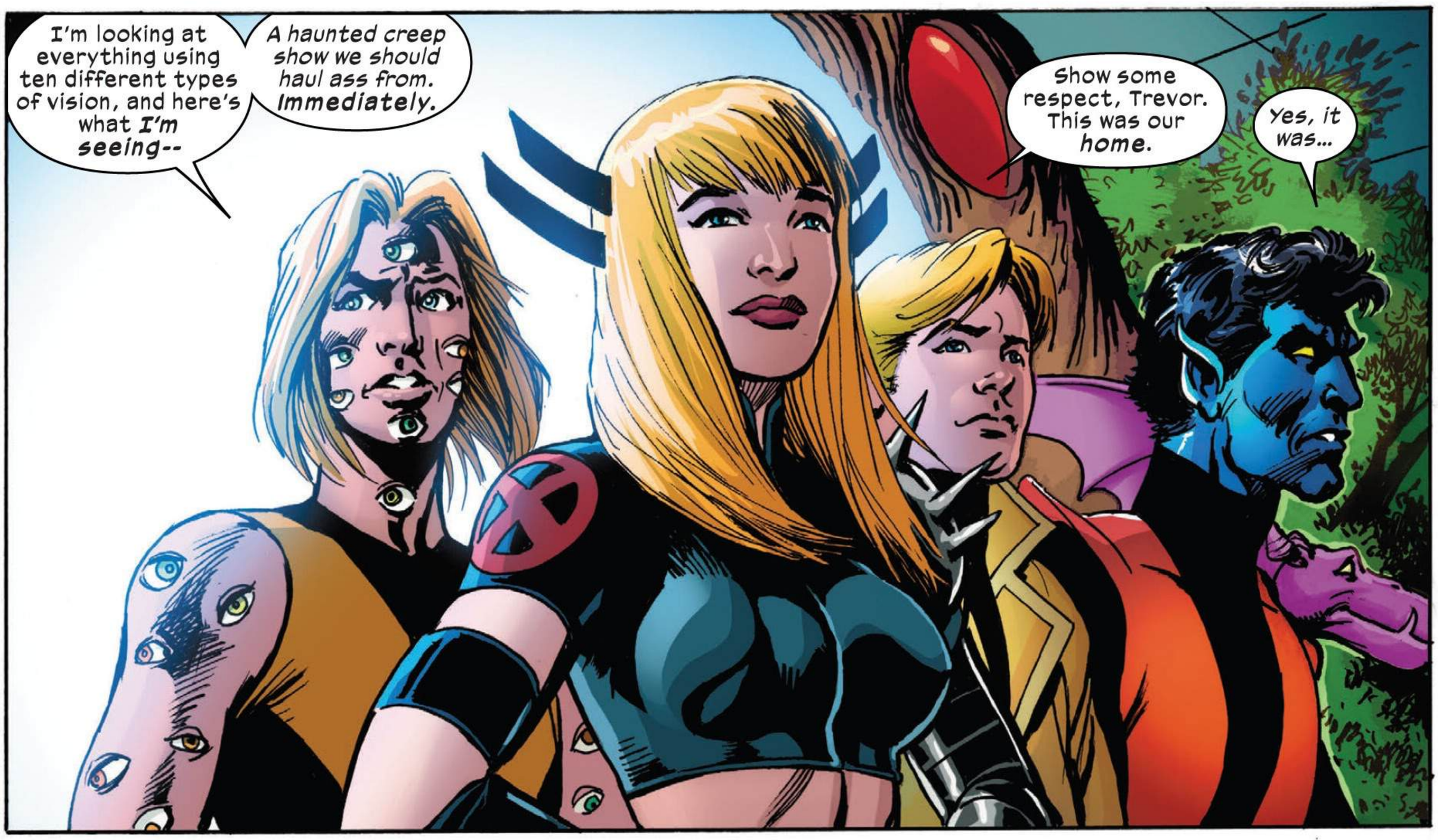
Westchester.





It's supposed to be deserted, right?
I mean, that's the point.

So why all the attempted breaches of the gateway here?
Well, that's not really *the problem,* 'Yana.
Krakoa has hundreds of access failures every day--*humans who try to walk through an active gate and then aren't able to.* It's how they ***work.*** It's how they're ***grown.***
But we're here because Krakoa smelled "mutant" in this gate's vicinity during each failure. Which begs the question...***what in the world is going on at the abandoned X-Mansion?***
Only one way to find out.
*Trevor?*

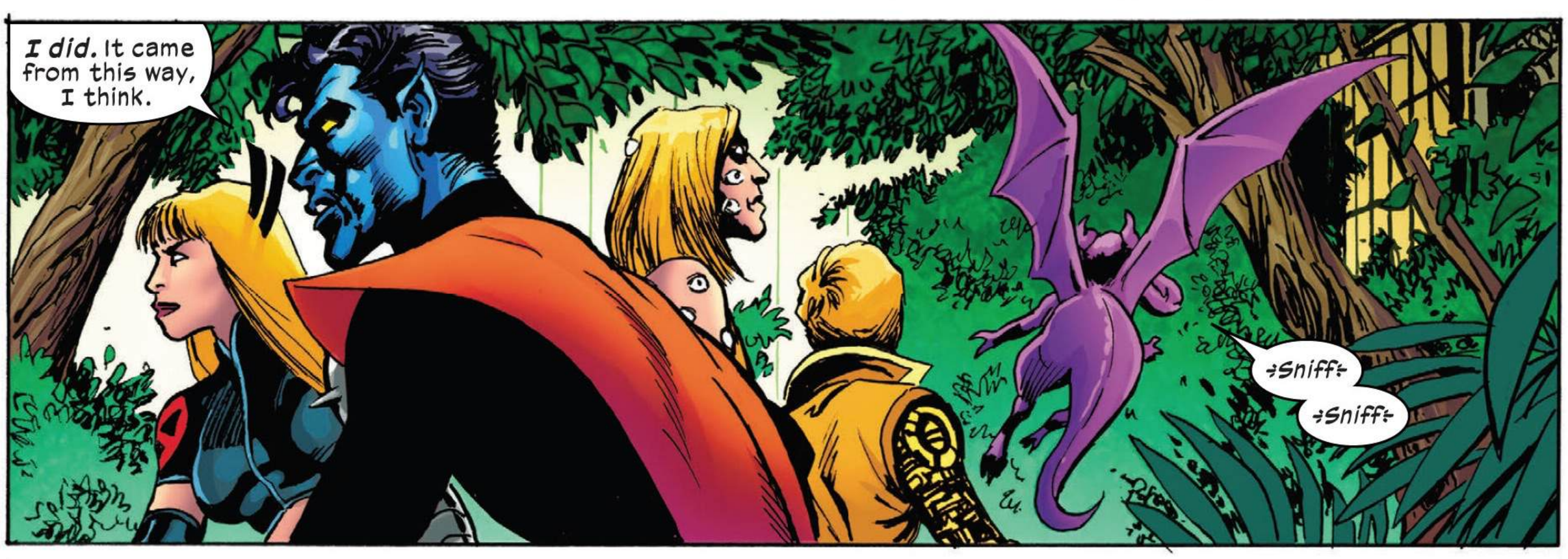

I'm looking at everything using ten different types of vision, and here's what I'm seeing--
A haunted creep show we should haul ass from. Immediately.
Show some respect, Trevor. This was our home.
Yes, it was...

...but he's not wrong. Something's off.

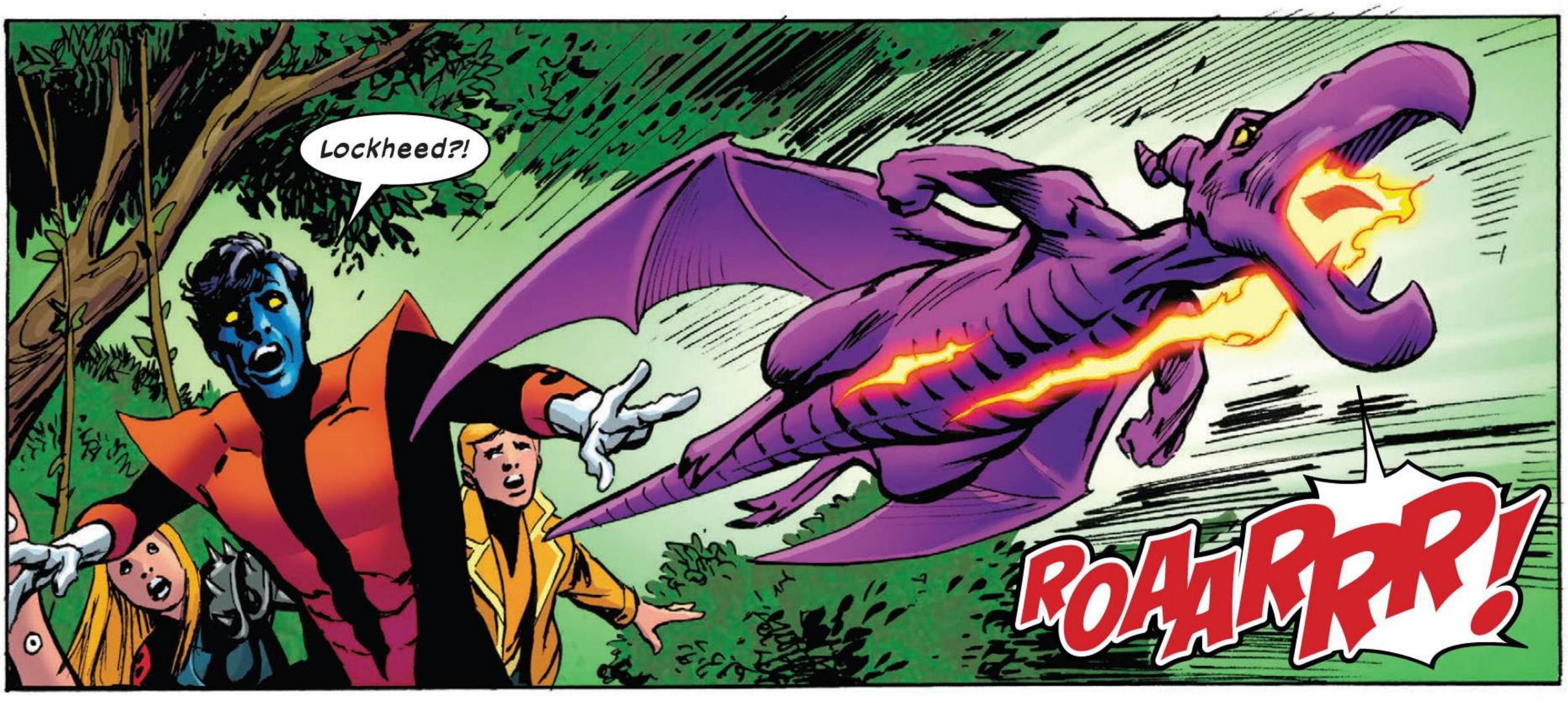
Infrared. Night vision. Aural. Thermal. This place looks empty...

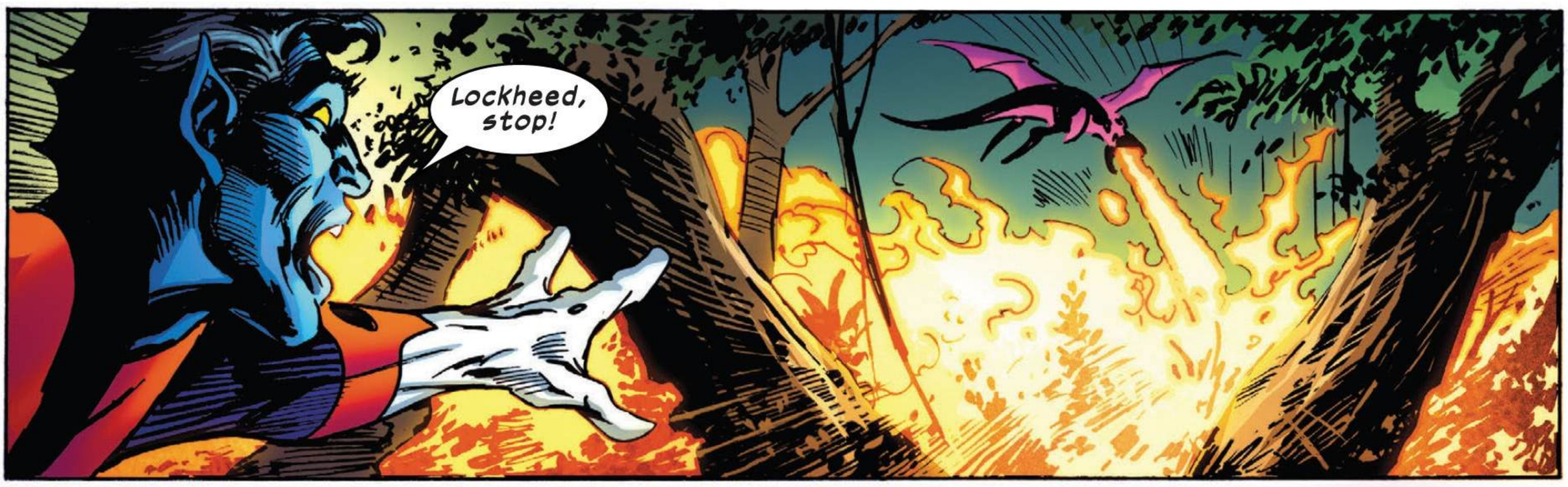
...but it isn't. I'm seeing recent movement everywhere...
Human?

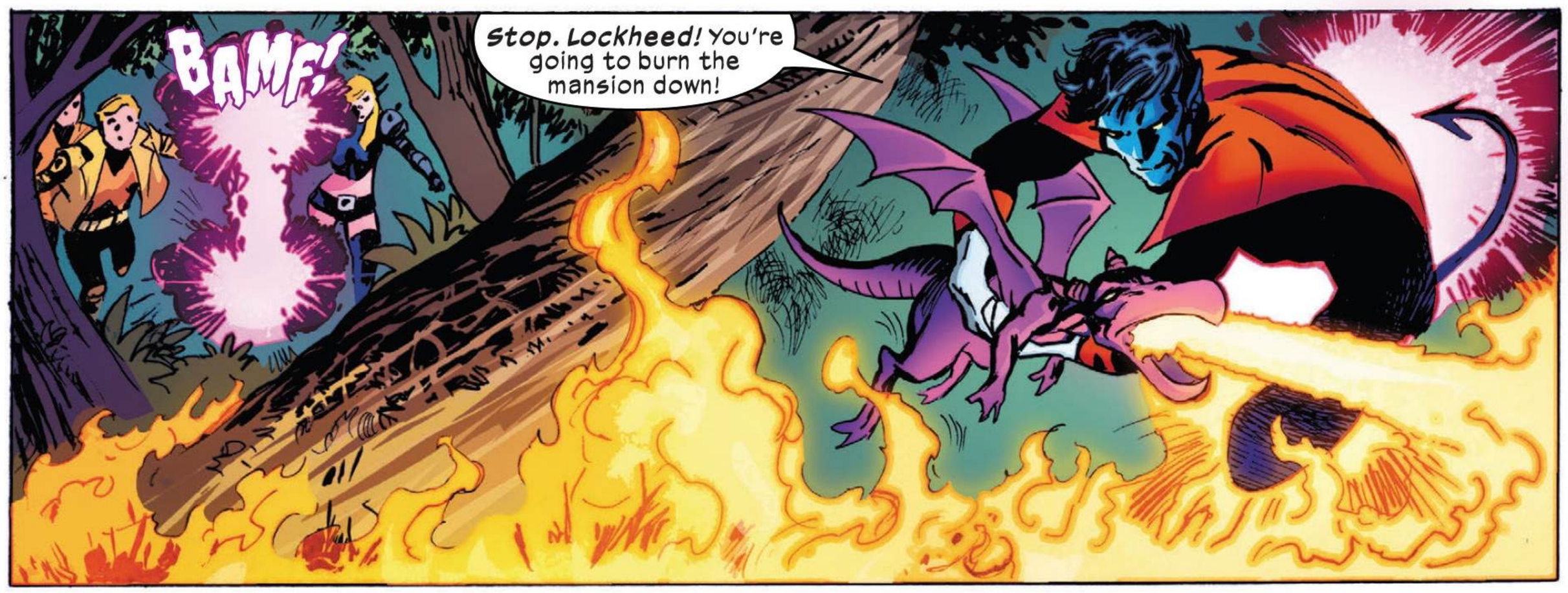
NO. Not human...
But I can't make out--
RUSTLE!
Did you hear that?


I did. It came from this way, I think.
÷Sniff÷
÷Sniff÷

÷Sniff÷
÷Sniff÷
÷Snort!÷


Lockheed?!
ROAARRR!


Lockheed, stop!


BAMF!
Stop. Lockheed! You're going to burn the mansion down!

FWOOSH!

Would you listen to me, Lockheed? Stop!
What's gotten into you?

You're acting like you've...

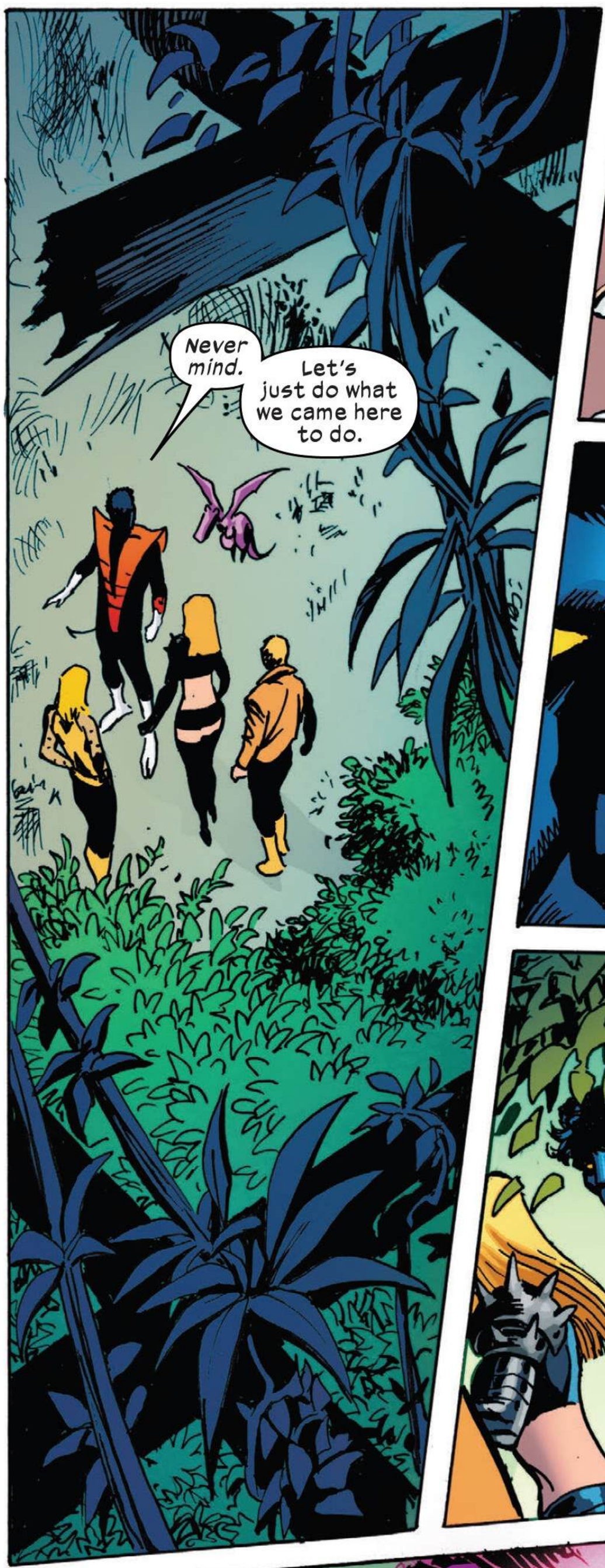
...seen a ghost.

Kurt! Are you okay?
I'm fine. I just saw...

Saw...
He's gone.

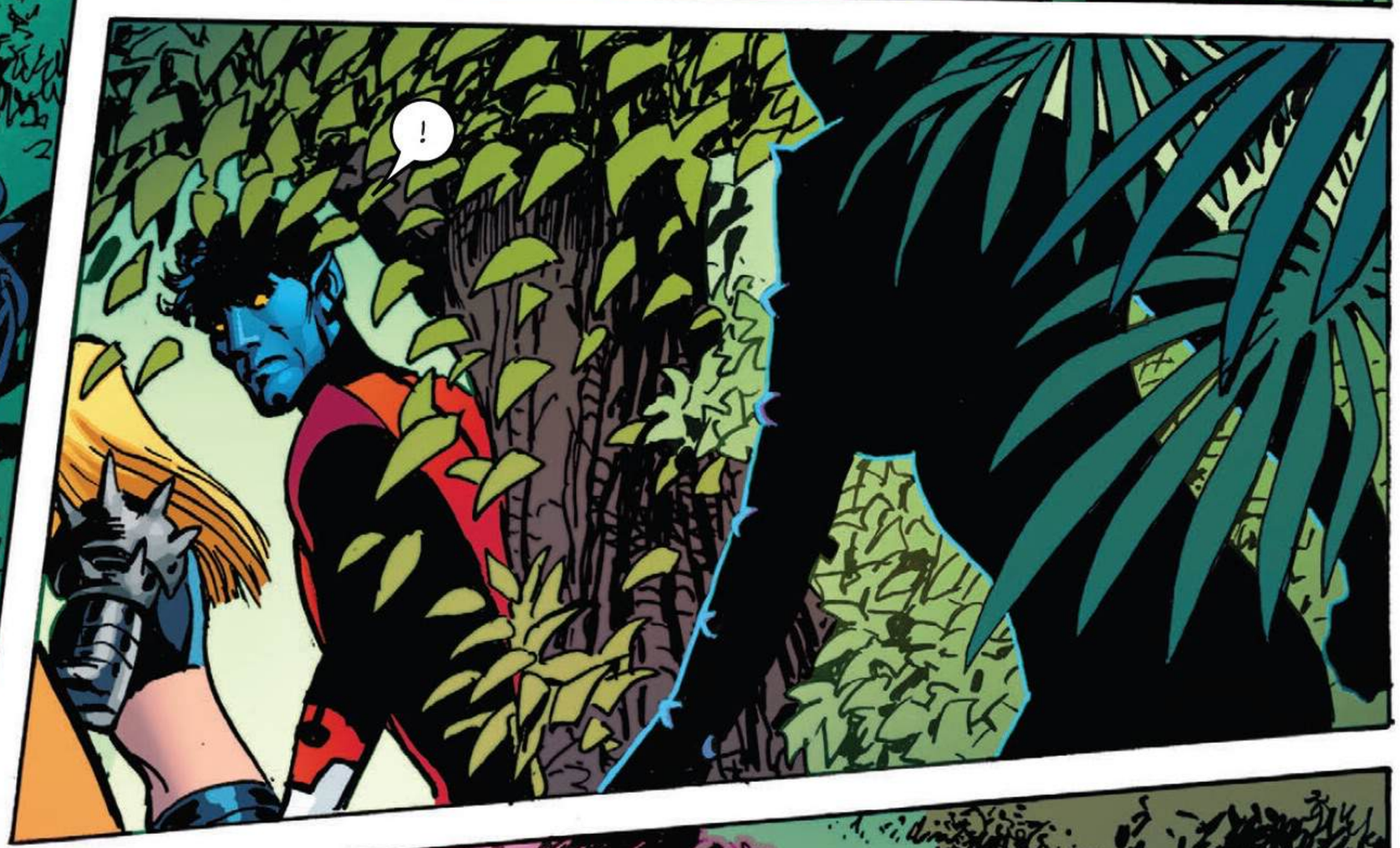
Who's gone?
I... I'm not sure.
Trevor, are you picking up anyone? I swear I saw someone standing right here...

No. Nothing beyond what I was seeing earlier.
Maybe it was the smoke...


Never mind.
Let's just do what we came here to do.

Grrrrr...

RUSTLE!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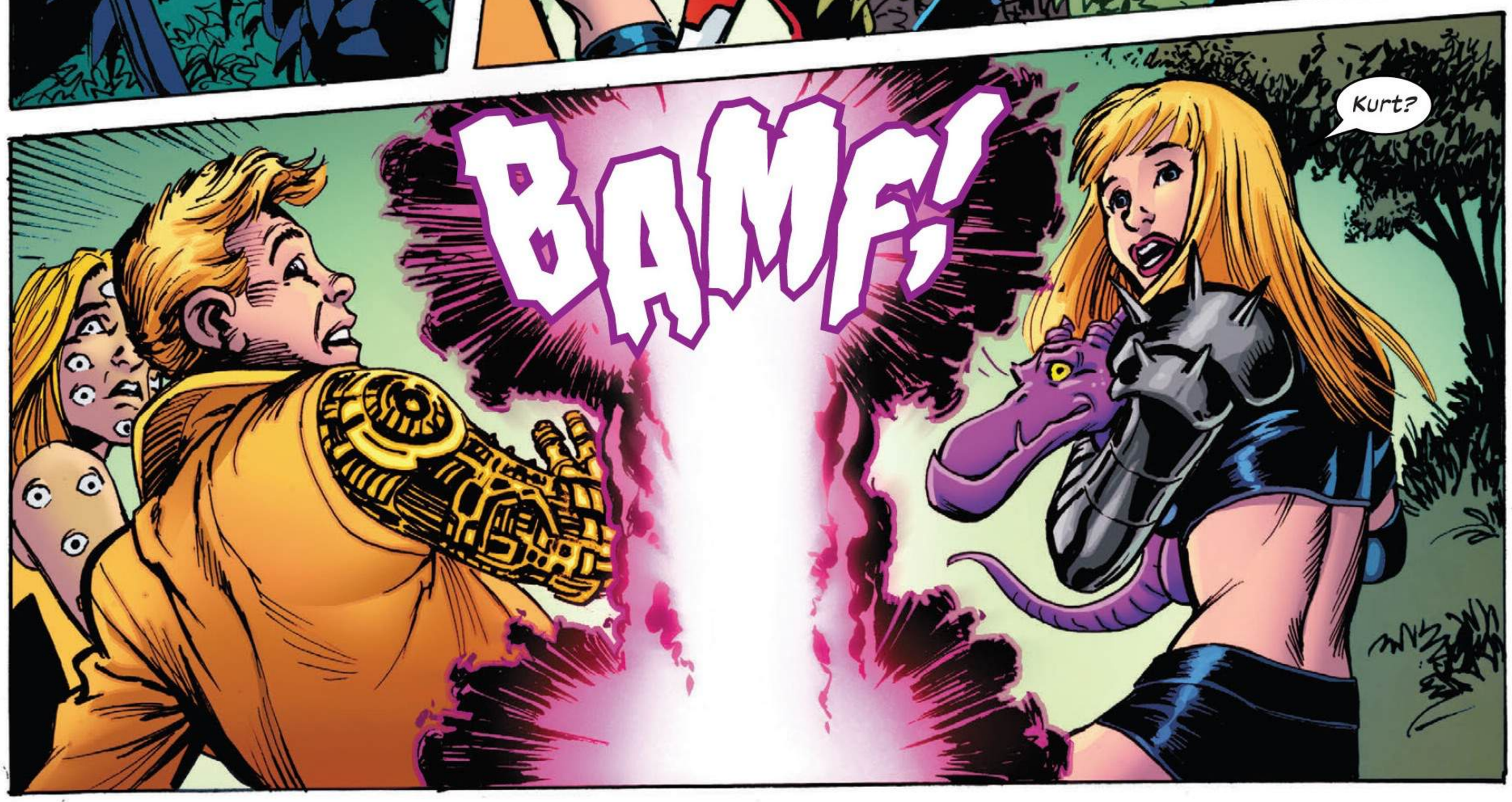
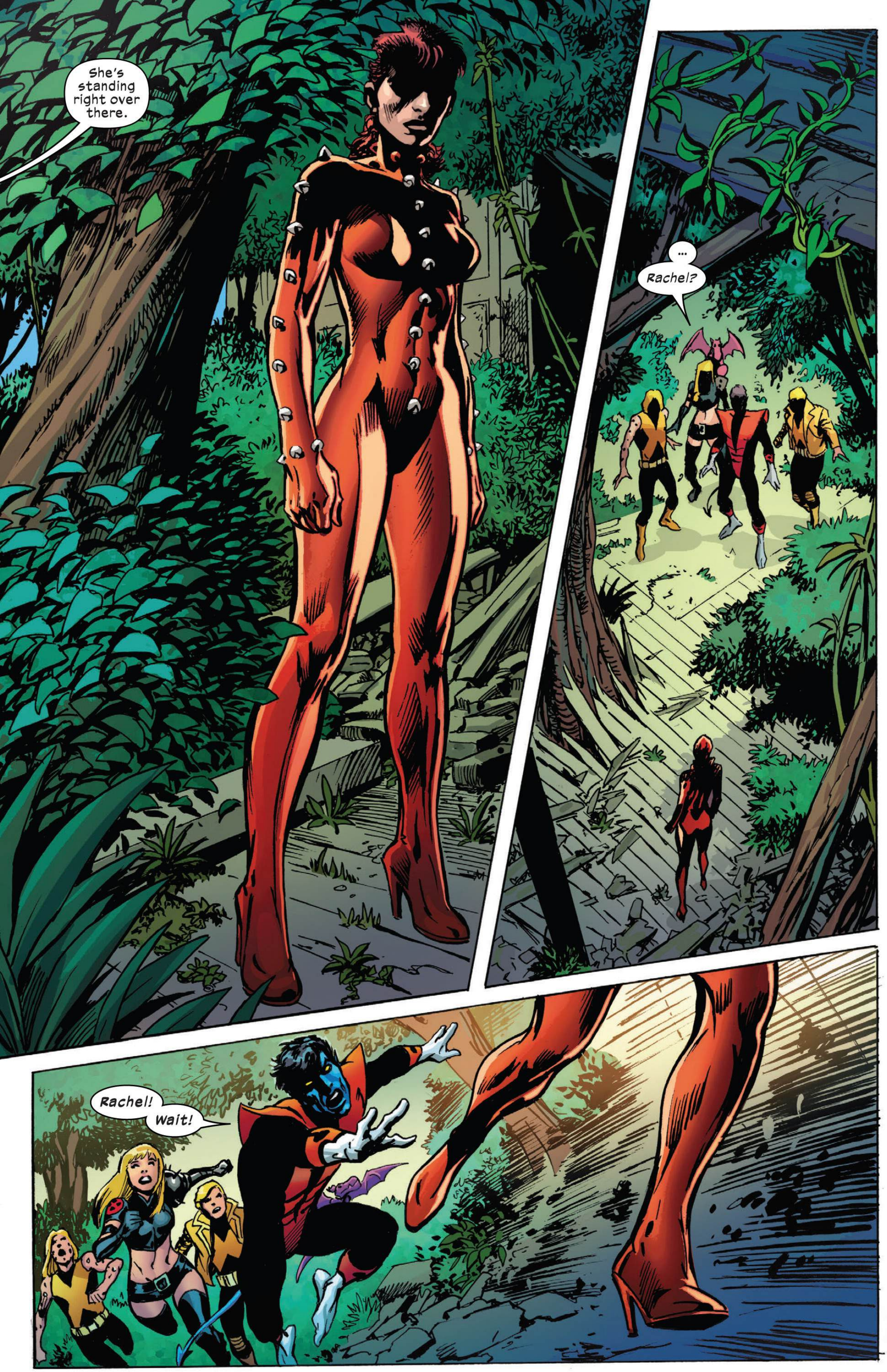

BAMF!
Kurt?

BAMF!
BAMF!
BAMF!
Kurt! What are you doing?
I don't understand. Where did she go?
I could have sworn I saw Rachel.
Rachel?
Yes. But she looked wrong. She was a hound.
You mean dressed in red leather? Serious heels? Spikes everywhere?
So you saw her too?
Yeah...


She's standing right over there.
...
Rachel?
Rachel!
Wait!

She's headed underground.
We need to stop her!
Be careful, Nightcrawler!
Wherever she's headed--whatever's down there--I'm picking up a huge spike in both temperature and density.
It doesn't read as part of the mansion or the campus grounds.
I see it, Trevor. Some kind of tunnel...
Looks almost alien.
I'm stopping this...
NOW!
BAMF!

Is she okay?
I'm not sure. It's almost like she's in a trance...
Rachel! Can you hear me? Snap out of it!
Rache--
Did you hear that?
Absolutely. Some kind of standard harmonic binary.
Which, yeah, is super weird and strange to come across here, but not quite as strange...
Trevor, did you get a close look at these?
They're slightly pulsing...
Almost as if...

HRRKKKK!
DOUG!
Okay, that's not something you see every day.
I mean, *you* never see it--*ever*--but for me, watching a phase shift at the molecular level is...
...pretty cool. Minus the Doug part.
We should probably go after him--*but we're going to have to go after her too.*
ACH!
RACHEL!
COME BACK!

And, of course... *the idiot does.*

I guess the real question--*if the guy survives*--is has the idiot learned his *lesson?*

Well, that depends if the new thing he's looking at is a bright, shiny object like this, which...

PLINK-PLORK-DOOP
...is clearly a repurposed antimatter drive of alien origin.
Now how did you get here?

SHREEE
SKRRCH SKRK

Oh boy...

Light ahead.
The tunnel's ending.
Look. Rachel's just standing there...
Feels like a trap, doesn't it?
Let's take it nice and easy, Kurt.
Trevor, stay here and--
I know, I know...keep an eye out.
Which is hilarious, let me tell you--like someone telling me I need to make eye contact or asking me to wink.
Okay, Rachel...
Time to tell us what's going on...
I'm trapped...
Sleepwalking...

Dreaming...
Dreaming of traveling...
Migrating to other worlds...
Always moving...
Hunting...
Capturing...

Now lost...
Left behind...
Alone...
Help me...
Help us...
Help.
Help!

HELP!
HELP.
HUH?!
Oh no...

Those are SIDRI!
Uh, I have no idea what that is...
They're bounty hunters!
An entire race of them!
"Okay...say that one more time..."

...but a little slower.
No, no...I get it.
We're all a little territorial.
Still doesn't mean you have to get punchy.
Listen, I'm going to try something a bit different, so don't freak out, okay?
We can figure this out...

"...there's no need to fight about it."

Sorry to pull rank here, Kurt, but this has turned into something a bit more violent than what we were expecting.
I mean, I could do this all day, but...
Agreed. This isn't the right team for this situation.
Look, I'm swinging as hard as I can--there's just too many of them...
...but don't worry about me, worry about Doug. We can't just leave him behind.
No, we can't. Is it gonna be you or me, elf?
You. Your powers are better suited for finding him.
We'll stay here as long as we can. But hurry or I'll have to teleport Trevor clear.

Six quick jumps later.
There you are. I--
Oh no!
Doug! Look out! That giant one is--
Happy to see you, friend Illyana!
GAHH!
WARLOCK?!

Okay, Doug...normal arm... twinkle in your eye...how long have you and Warlock been *running this game?*
*And why?*
*Shh! Shh!* Friend Illyana. Secret has to stay a secret. For friendsake.
If I tell you, will you promise--*promise*--to keep it between us?
Do you really need to ask?
No, but it's--
Yes. I hear you. *We'll do it now.*
Illyana, we're going to have to finish this later when we have the time. *Right now,* we have to deal with what this *Sidri nest has netted.*
Go ahead, Warlock. *Tell them we're doing it now.*

Huh? They've all stopped. Why?
You probably can't pick it up, but they're all vibrating at the same frequency.
I don't think they've stopped...I think they're waiting.
Hey guys... look what I found.
Fantastic... can we please get the hell out of here?
That's exactly what the Sidri want.
But first, they'd like us to solve their nest's newest infestation.
What do you mean?

They've got a bit of a mutant problem.

Say hello to *Lady Mastermind.*

Which goes a long way to explaining why we've been seeing things.

*Ohhhhhh.*

What happened?

Take it easy. You've been out a while. What's the last thing you *remember?*

I came to the mansion to use the gateway. I heard something, and then... then...

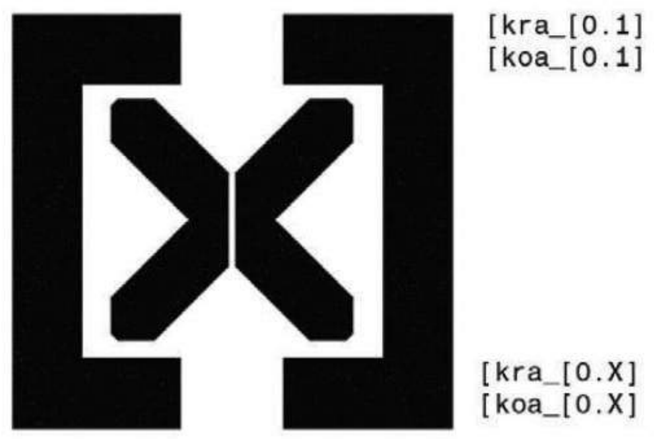
*That's all I can remember.*

Doug, how did you know she was here?
They told me. Well, they didn't tell me it was her. I just knew it was mutant.
These Sidri are all hatchlings--I'm guessing they've been gestating since the last time they invaded the mansion...
...and they must have hatched after everyone left for Krakoa and then jumped on the first mutant who disturbed their new nest.
I'm guessing Lady Mastermind--trapped and lashing out with her powers--exerted some control over them and us--asking for help the only way she knew how.
I mean... the symbiosis of it is probably more complicated than that, but you get the point.
Good job, Doug.
Well done.
Thanks, but I'd hold off on that...
...I kinda had to make a deal with them.

Maybe. Maybe not. You never know, Douglas, perhaps we can find a way to ***make it work.***

And why shouldn't we be ***hopeful?*** These are *new days* for our people...

And today we've added one more to our number.



[kra_[0.1]
[koa_[0.1]

[kra_[0.X]
[koa_[0.X]

This has been:

# HAUNTED MANSION

Featuring...

Nightcrawler

Magik

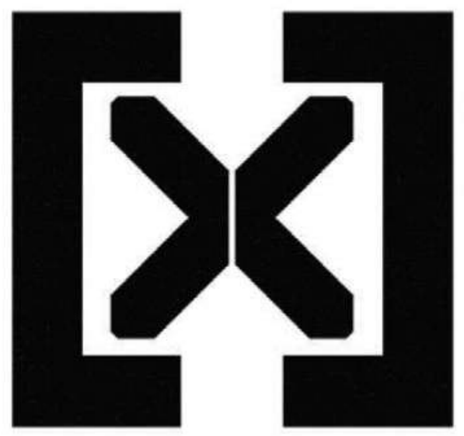
Cypher

Eye-Boy

Lockheed

# Wait & See

# 12



[kra_[0.1]
[koa_[0.1]

[kra_[0.X]
[koa_[0.X]

# WAIT & SEE

Even before becoming one of the founding architects of the mutant nation Krakoa, Magneto's destiny was irrevocably intertwined with that of mutantkind. Magneto's single-minded goal to protect and uplift his people above all else has been an ongoing source of strife -- but rarely has he seemed so close to achieving it...

Magneto

Emma Frost

Namor

[kra_[0.1]...]
[koa_[0.1]...]

[A._New_World]

NOW.

Mykines. The Faroe Islands.
I'm not much for solving mysteries...
...and we really don't get much in the way of visitors outside of tourists searching for the perfect picture to let everyone know just how adventurous they are.
But you, friend, don't strike me as the picture-taking type.
No. I am not.
Then I can assume that's your boat parked off the coast of our little island?
Yes. It is.

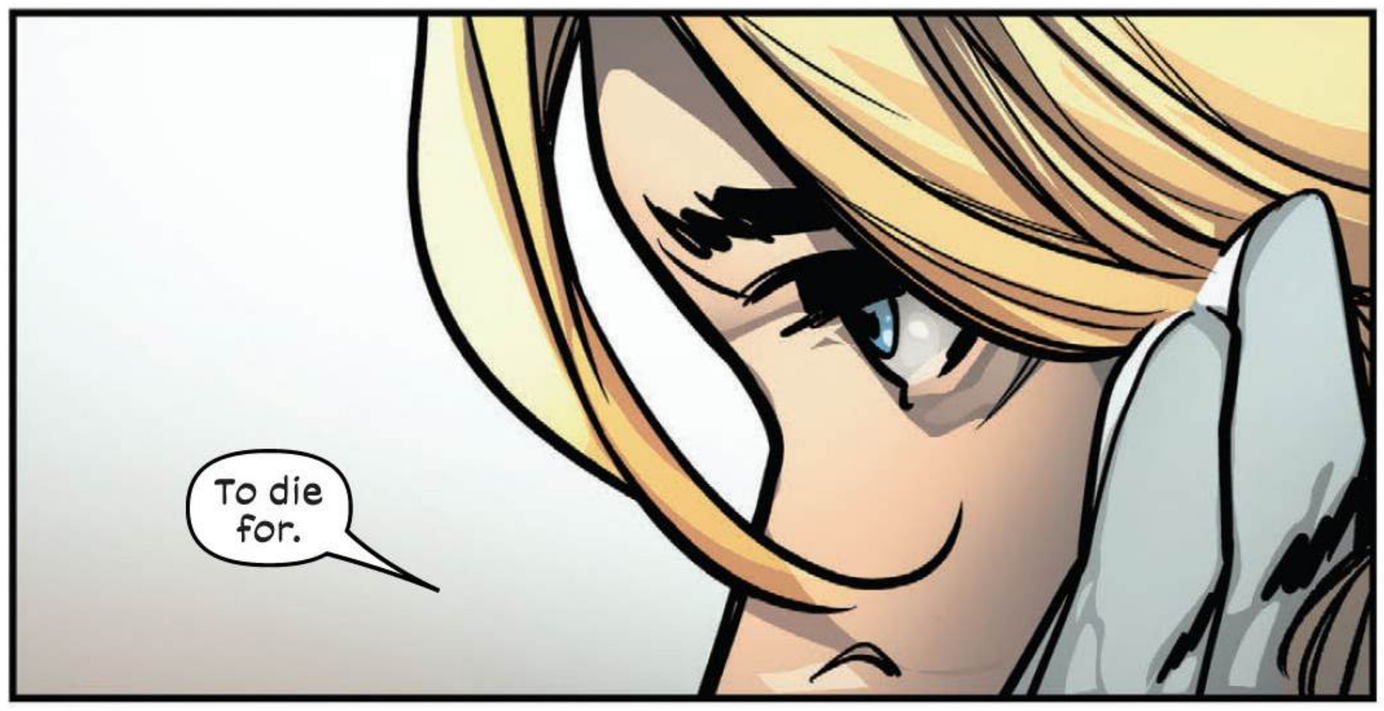
Islands have been an interest of mine for quite some time. I've been collecting them for years...
I was recently asked to put my expertise into action and procure one for a colleague. There were...certain requirements regarding location, weather... other uninteresting demands...
So here I am. Money in hand.
Well, you're talking to the wrong man, first of all.
Second, the owner is...a bit eccentric. A hard fellow to know, if I'm being honest.
Yes. He does have something of a reputation, doesn't he?
Uh-huh. You want me to give him a shout? Let him know there's an interested buyer?
Yes. That would be helpful. Thank you.
...
Could be a while.
I can wait.

Then.
Thank you for joining me, Erik.
CLINK!

Honestly, I'm a little insulted that it's taken you this long to invite me.
Word has spread, Emma. There's no hiding the mutant miracle you have running your kitchen.
Speaking of...
Saucier here is a gift. Ask him, he will tell you.
And if you doubt him, he will threaten you with dirt.
If I feed you dirt, Ms. Frost, you will eat dirt, and then you will thank me for it.
Tonight, however, you eat the lobster. He died for you and from his death I have resurrected him as a dish so succulent that you, in fact, might die from indulgence.
But do not fear. This is Krakoa, and there are worse ways to die.

Well, let's put the man to the test, shall we?

My god.
That's...
That's...
I know...
Right?

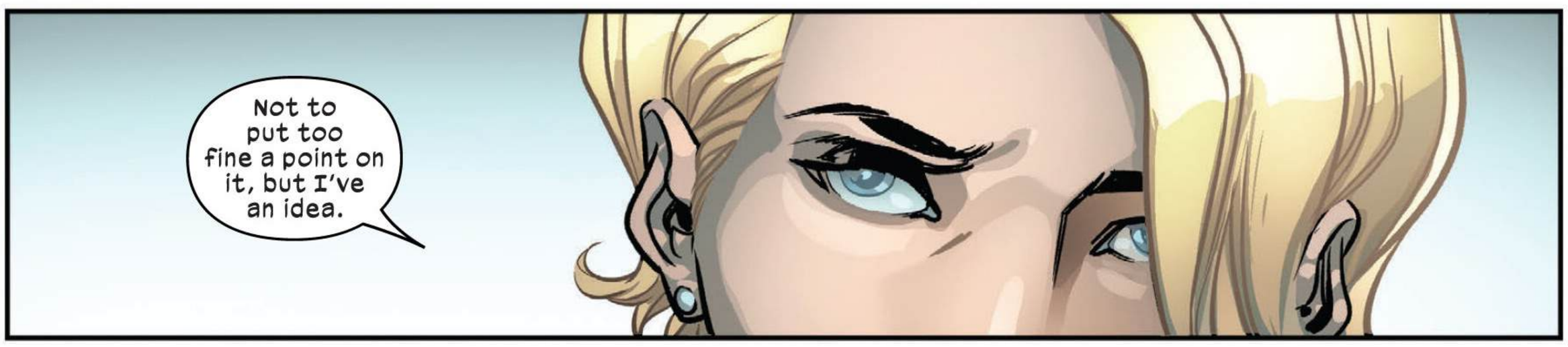

To die for.

I suppose, then, you should tell me why you invited me here...

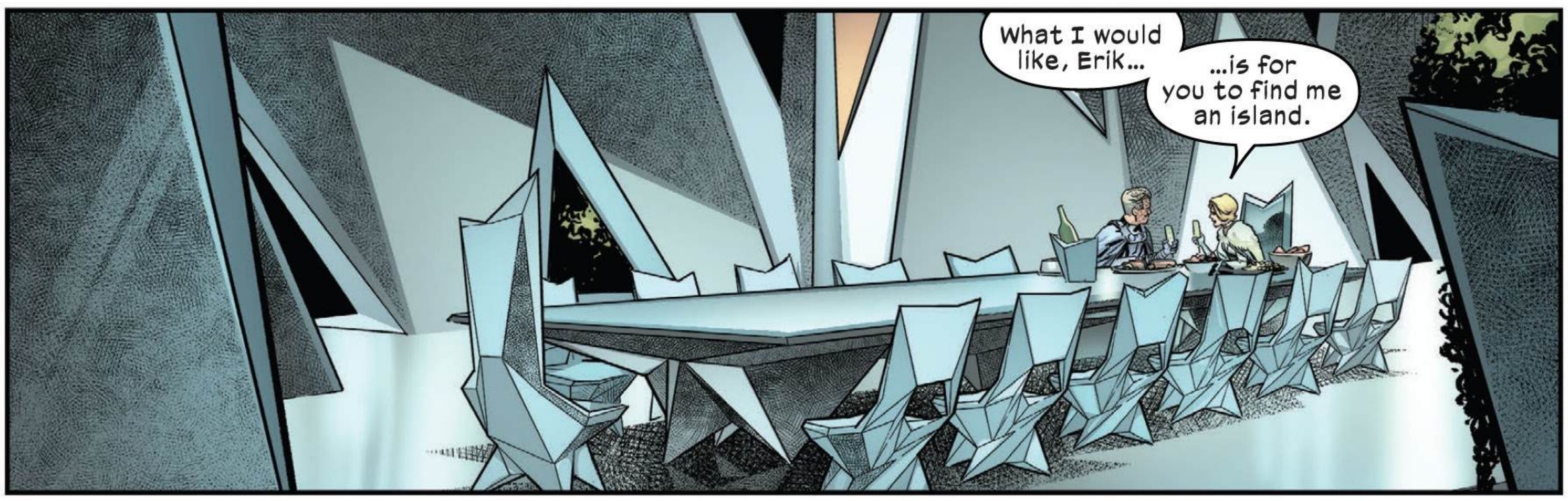
Might be a good idea to get that in before dessert.

Be a dear and top me off...
...and I'll be happy to tell you.
Of course. Happy to.

So...over the past few months, with the continued success--*and occasional setback*--of all things Hellfire, I have learned from watching how humanity is reacting to what we are doing, and, well...


Not to put too fine a point on it, but I've an idea.

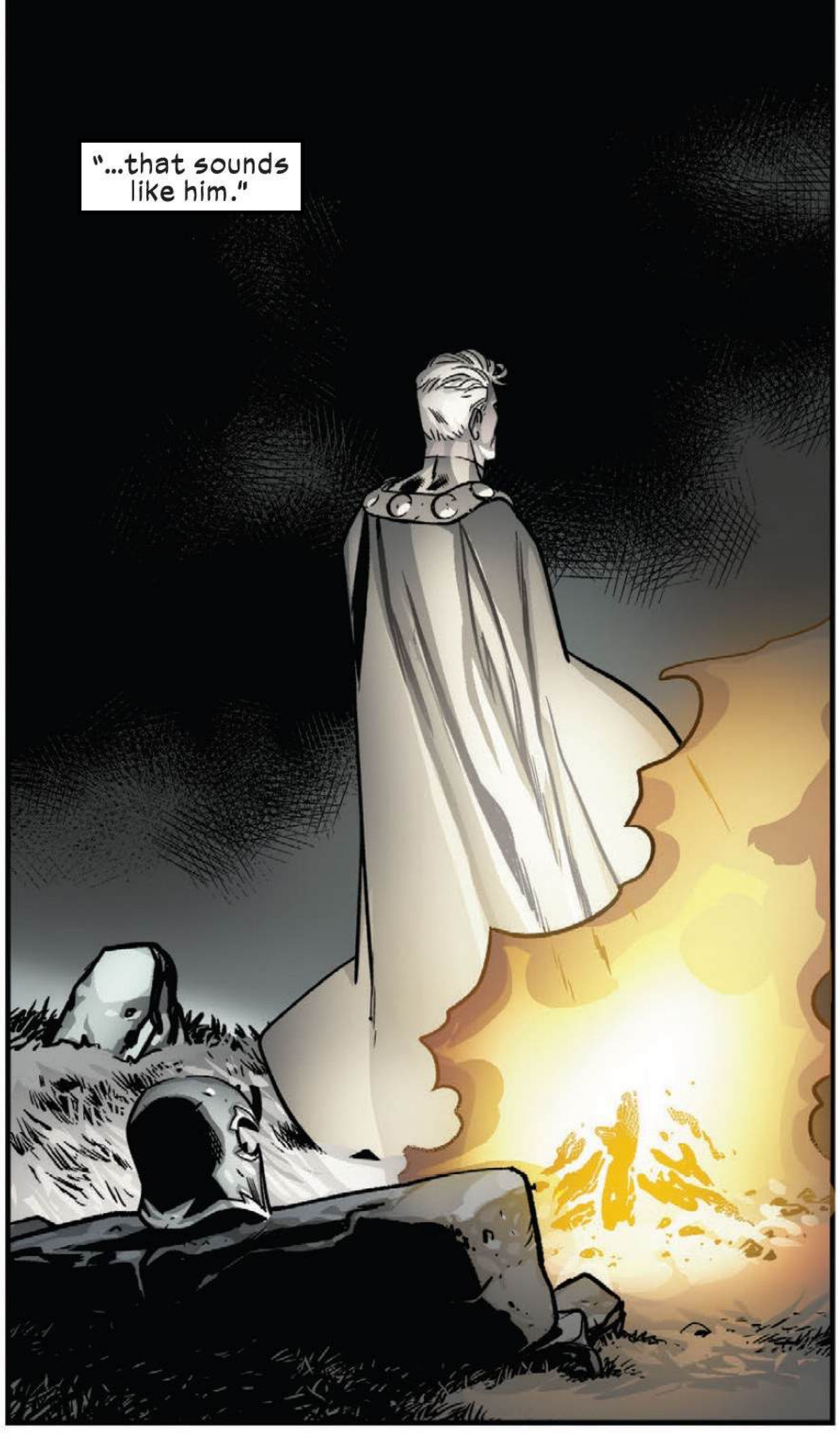
And you would like me to help?

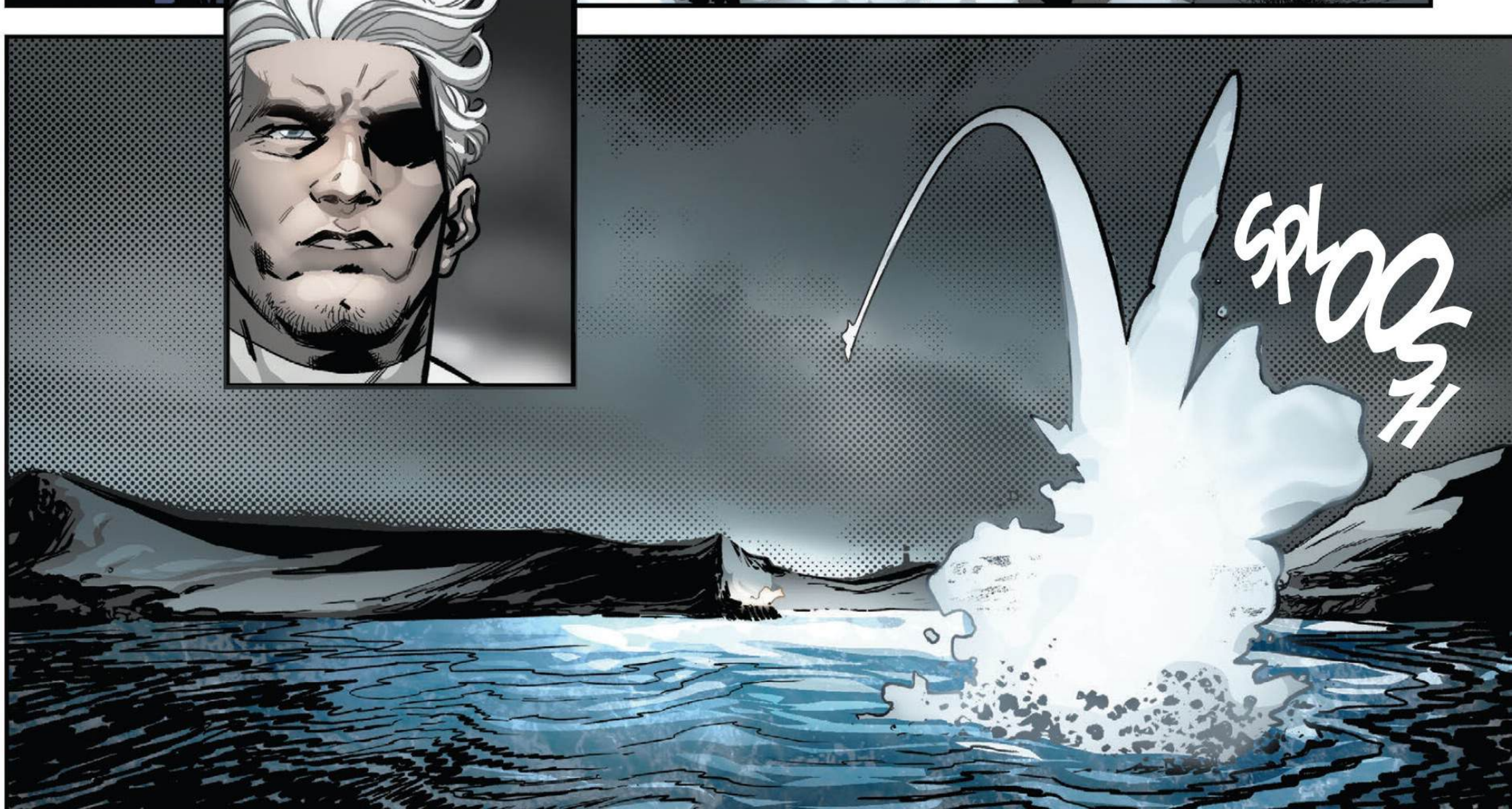

What I would like, Erik...
...is for you to find me an island.

NOW.

Something to warm you up, friend?
That would be nice.
Thank you.
I heard from him.
Oh?

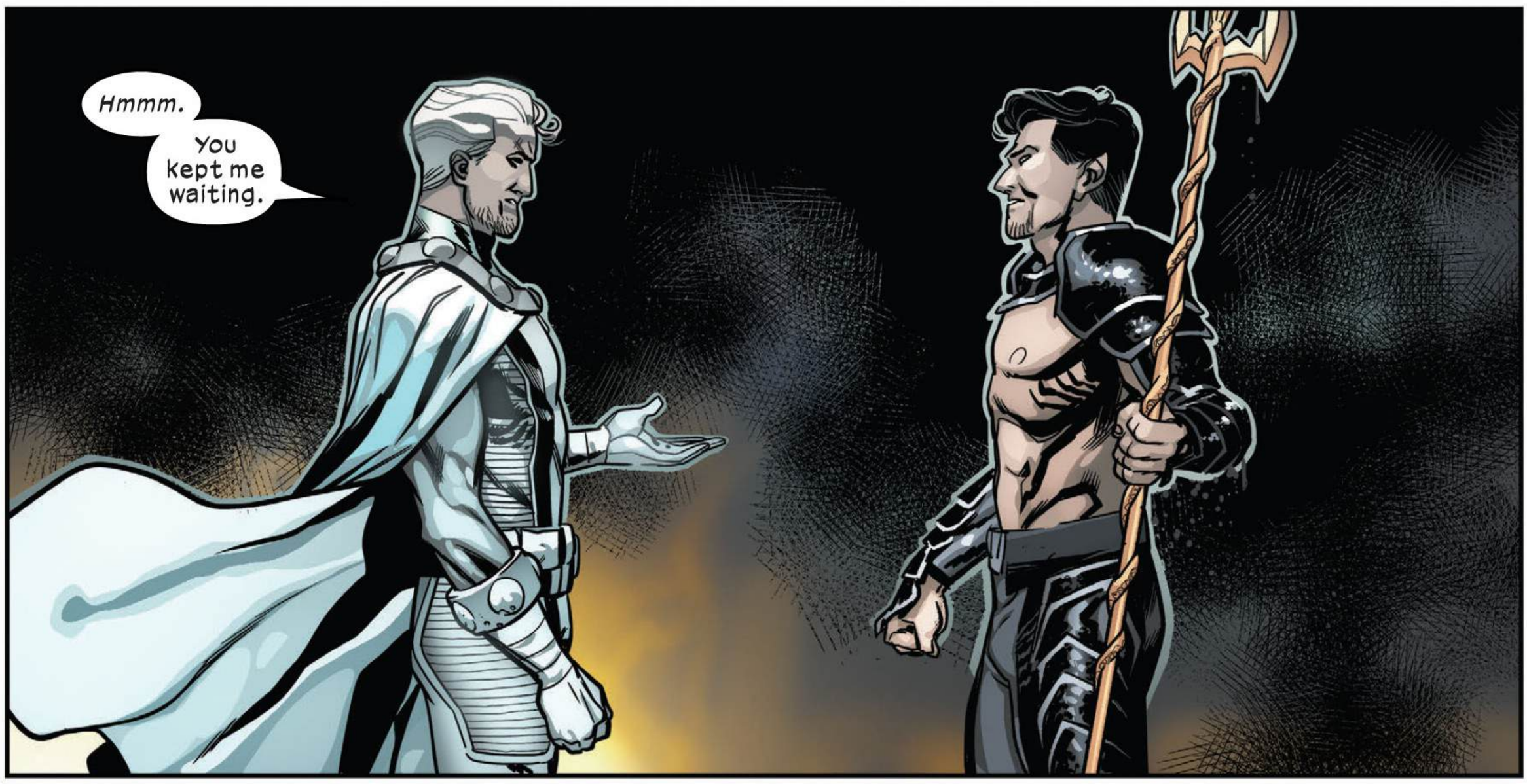
He said he'll get here when he feels like. No specific word on when that might be.
Yes...


"...that sounds like him."

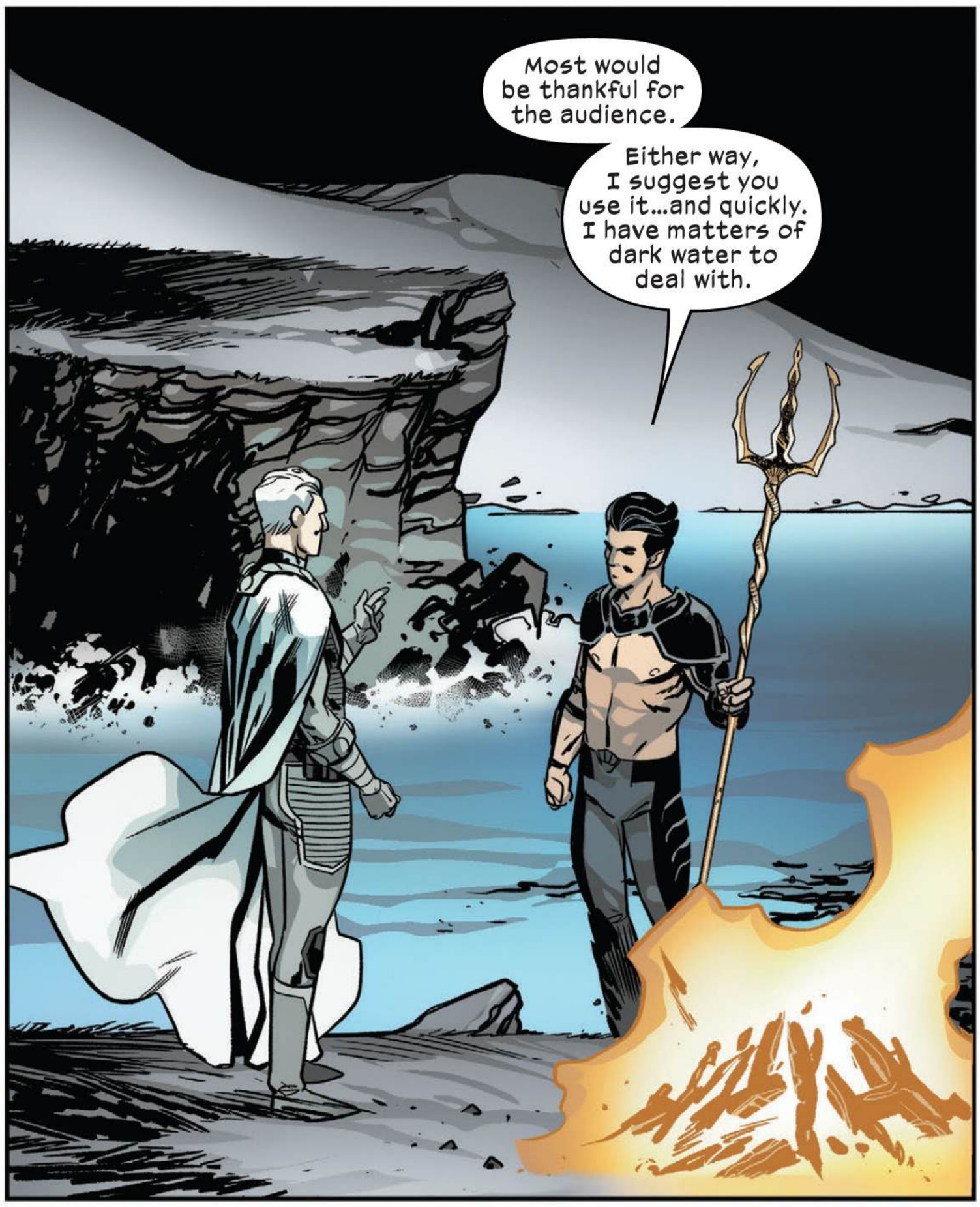

SPLOOSH

As a boon for diligent service, I gave the caretaker here an Atlantean gresh to contact me if ever he needed my assistance. Need, not want...

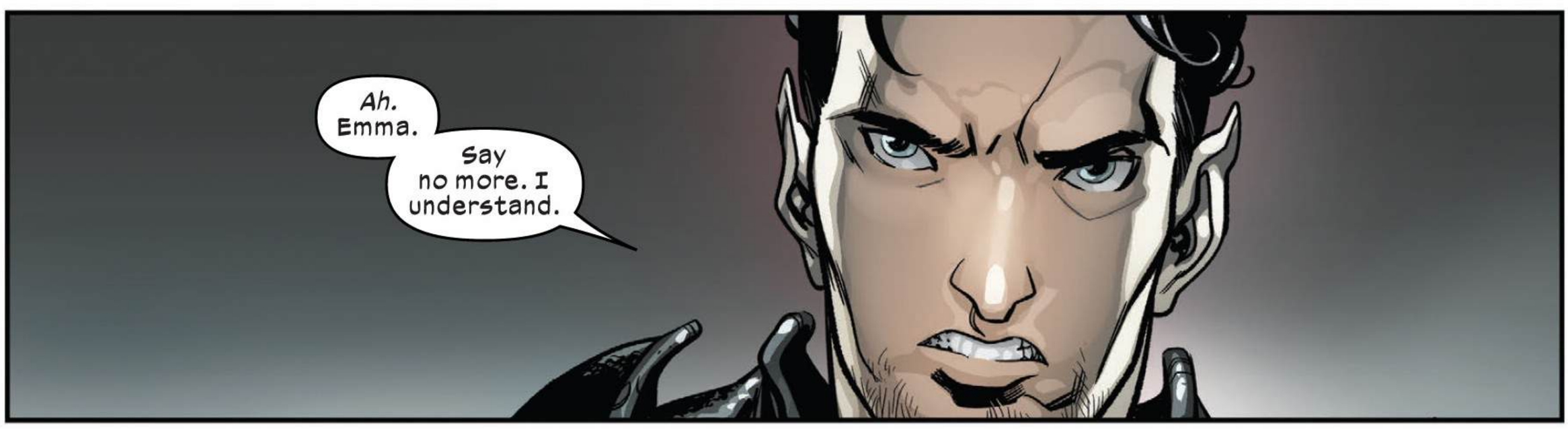
Yet here I am, Prince of the Ocean, King of Atlantis, answering the summons of "there's a stranger in our strange land"...only to find you. Just a mutant.
Less special each and every day, I think.


Hmmm.
You kept me waiting.

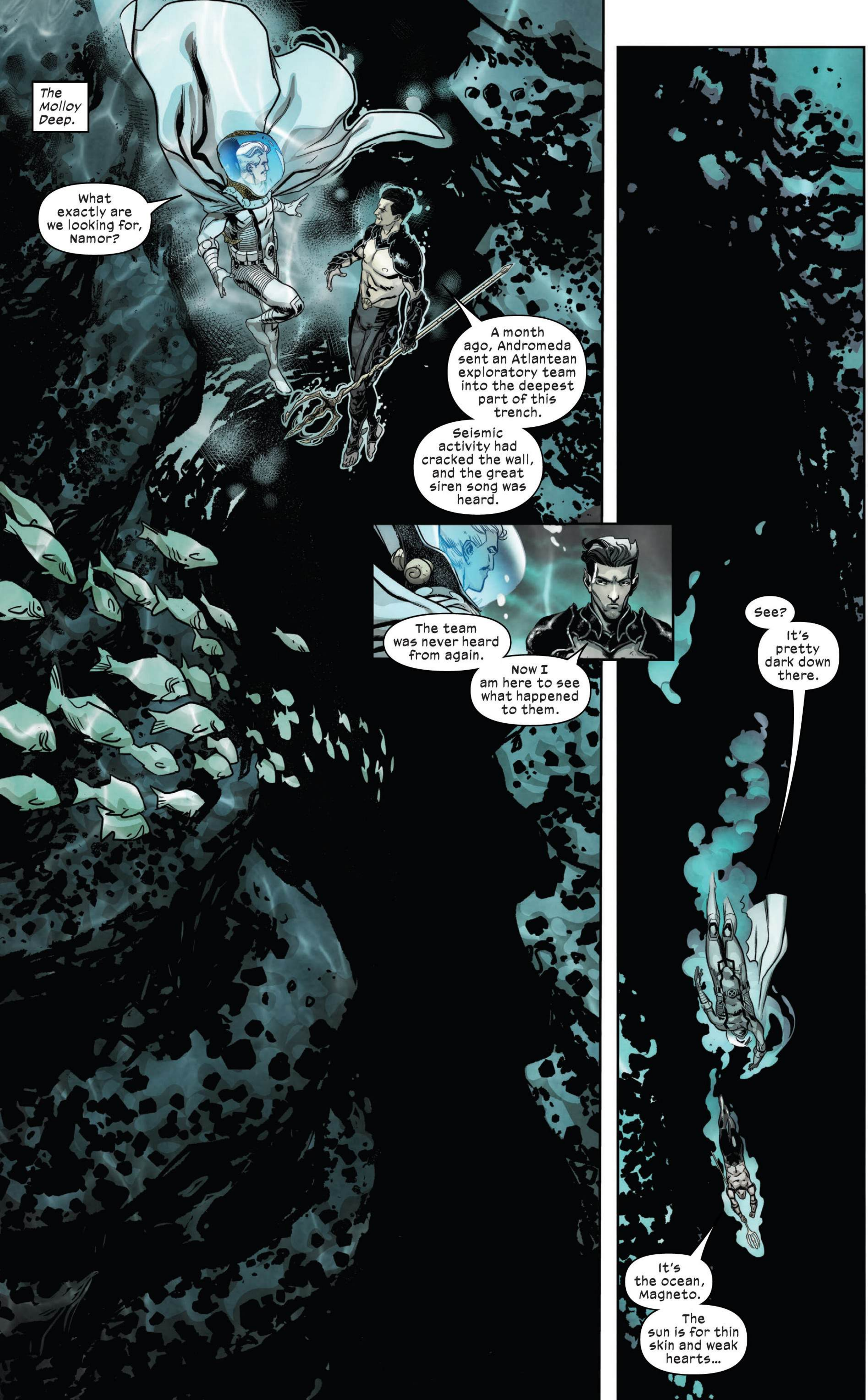
I am a king.
You were expecting it to be the other way?


Most would be thankful for the audience.
Either way, I suggest you use it...and quickly. I have matters of dark water to deal with.

I find I am more thankful with each passing day, Namor, but to be clear, I'm here on someone else's behalf.
It's the White Queen who would like to lease your island.


Ah. Emma.
Say no more. I understand.

Then we can come to terms?
That depends...do you feel like a swim?
I could take a dip.


The Molloy Deep.
What exactly are we looking for, Namor?
A month ago, Andromeda sent an Atlantean exploratory team into the deepest part of this trench.
Seismic activity had cracked the wall, and the great siren song was heard.
The team was never heard from again.
Now I am here to see what happened to them.
See?
It's pretty dark down there.
It's the ocean, Magneto.
The sun is for thin skin and weak hearts...

"...the deep is for those made of sterner stuff."
Hrmpt!
The unexpected things you find under hundreds of thousands of years of earth.
What is it?
It's the spiral of the Old Kings of Atlantis. Uhari, I think.
Can you open it?
It's a brass-tin-iron composite. Yes.
Should I?
Only one way to know for sure.
KERUNK

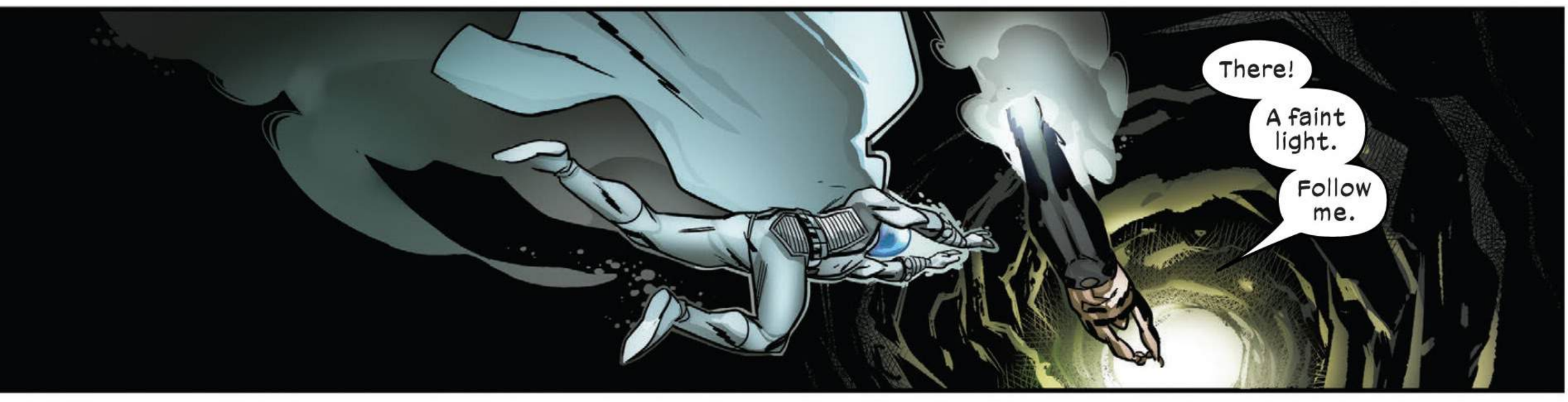
Bah!
Kraken!
It's always a kraken.

TOK
Be careful!
It's--
Hurk!
Unhand me, beast! Do you not see?
I am Namor!
Prince of the Ocean!
King of--
SNAP

--Atlantis.
Hrmph!

This is going well, I think.

It seems that we--


There!
A faint light.
Follow me.

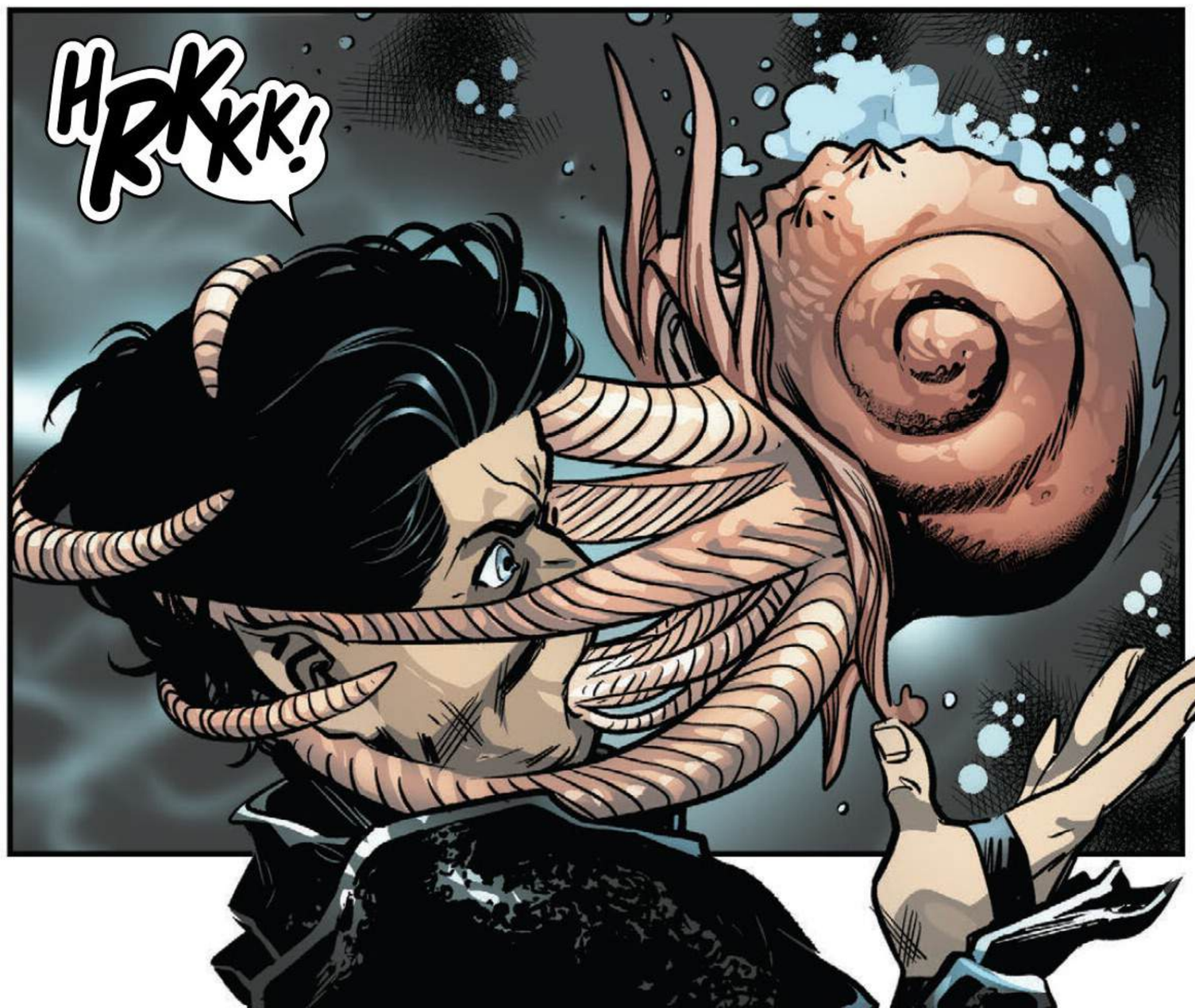
A man of the sea.
And a man of the earth.
What seek you, strangers?
Weeks ago I lost a group of explorers--*scientists*--in these deep waters.
I'm trying to find them.

Ah. Their bones are around here somewhere. Scattered with millennia of others.
Soon to be joined by yours, if you choose as they did.
Incorrectly.

See the spiral. See the stone.
Choose one and live. Choose the other and die.
There is only the choice and only in choosing correctly can you find your way back to shallow waters.
Ah!

This is simple.

The spiral is the symbol of the Uhari...
Now, I want you to tell me--


HRKKK!

NAMOR!
You can save him, if you wish. Simply make a better choice.

It seems so obvious.
The way you offer one thing or another...

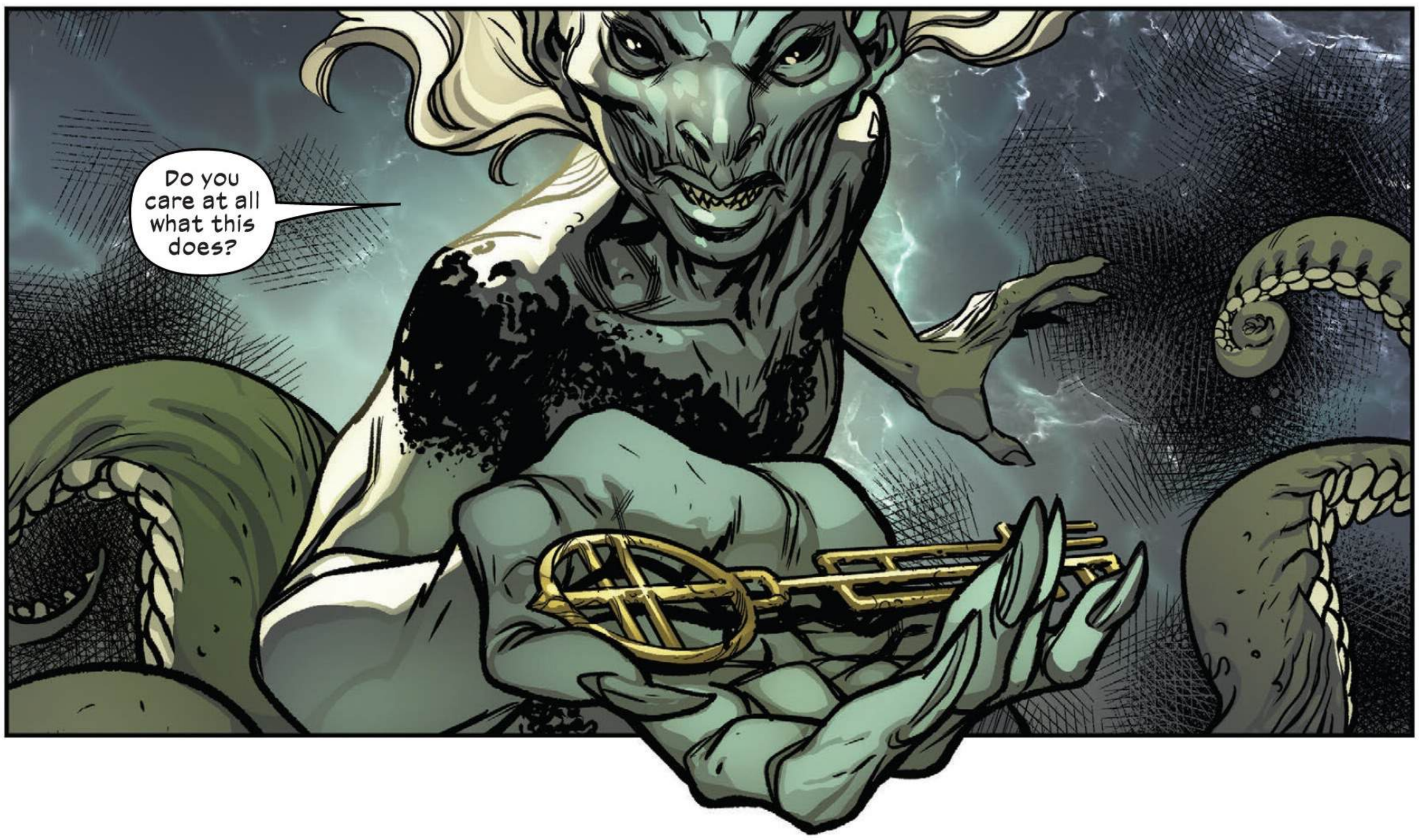
Yessss.

And yet...I see three pillars behind you.
So I do not choose the stone.
I choose the other.

NOOOO!

Trickster. Fraud.
Liar. Thief.

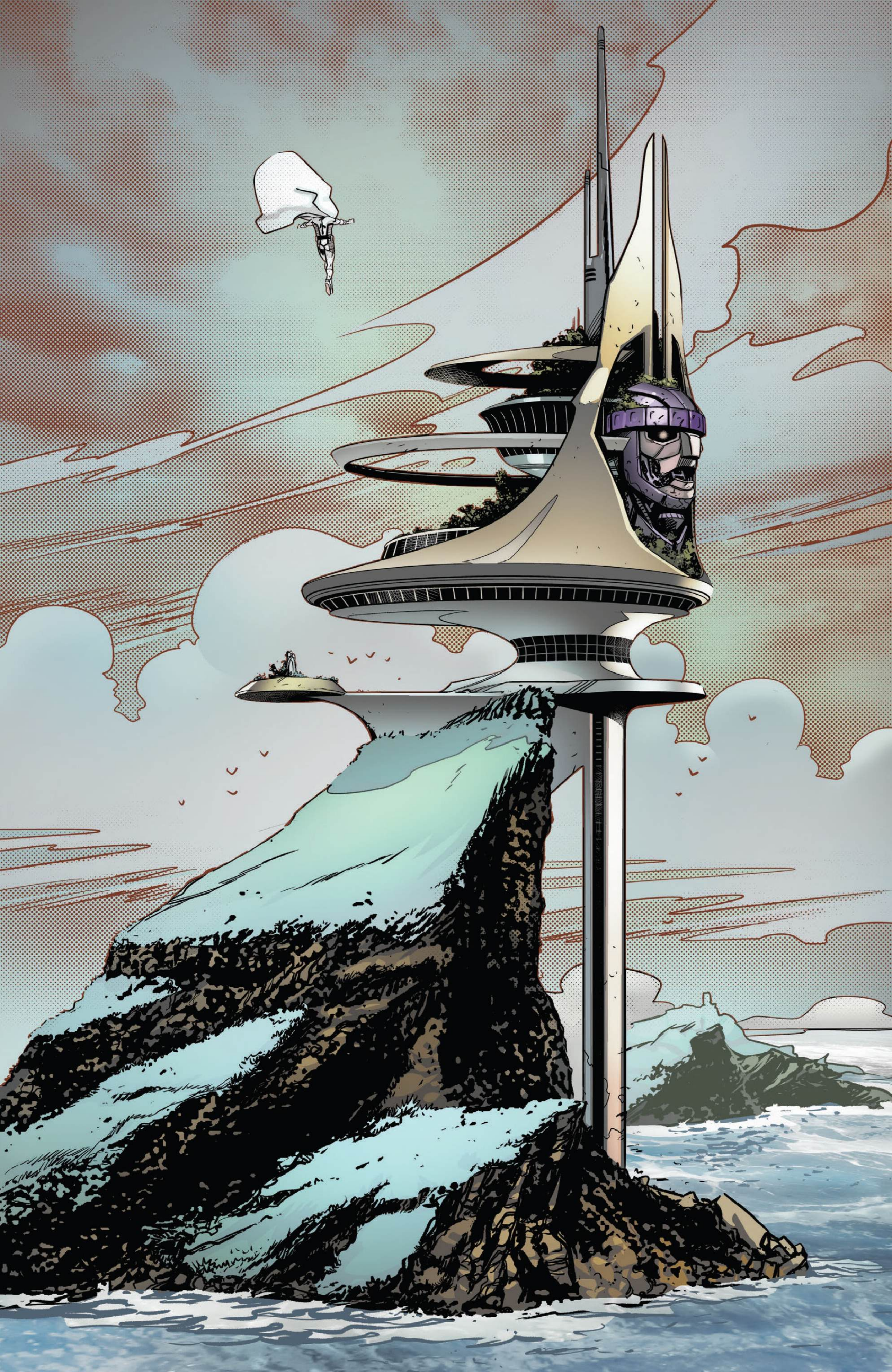
Do you have any idea what you've done?

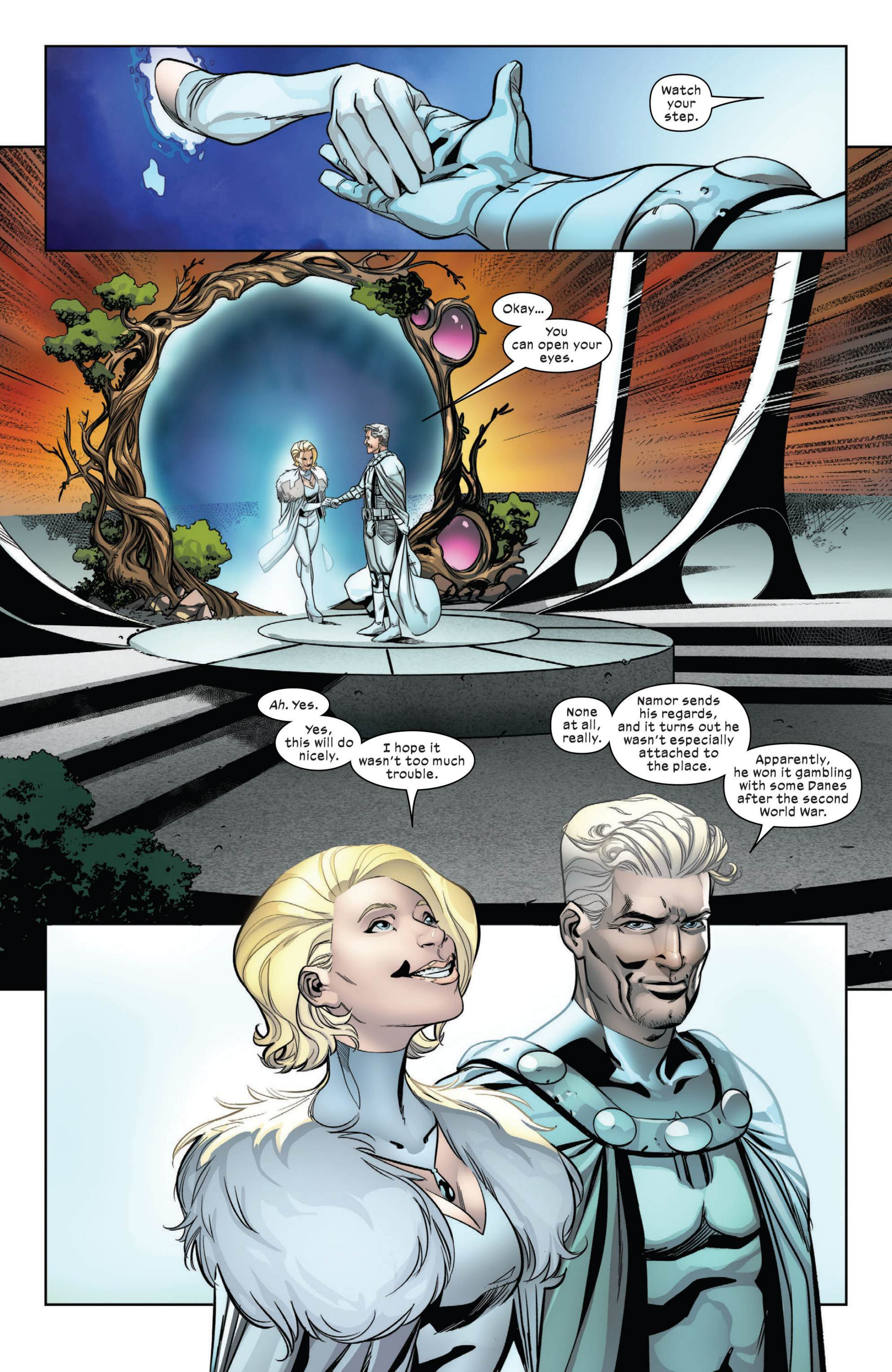

Do you care at all what this does?

"No. I do not."

"What are you going to do with it?"
The lady asked for a favor...

She gets a favor.



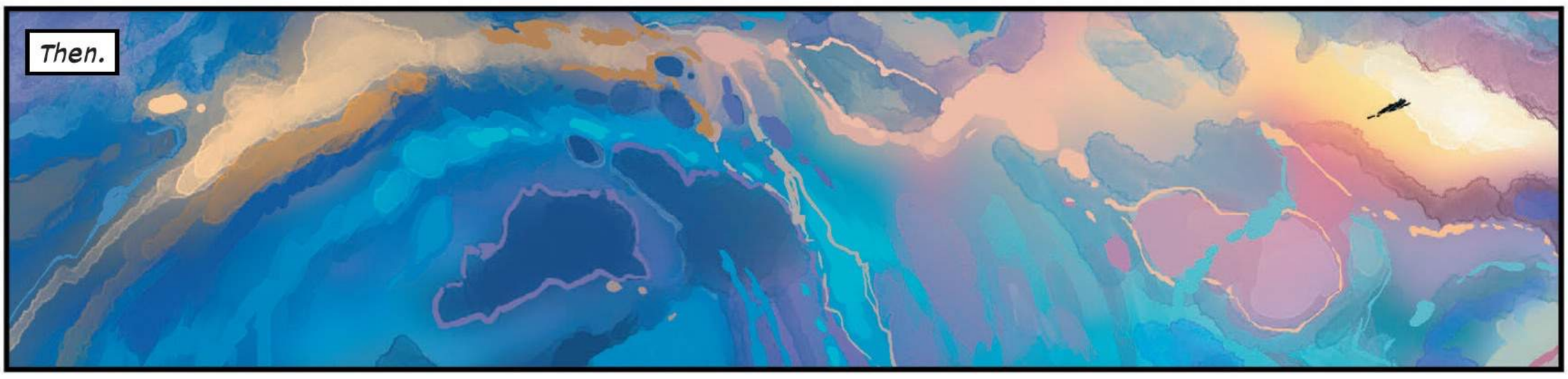

Watch your step.
Okay...
You can open your eyes.
Ah. Yes.
Yes, this will do nicely.
I hope it wasn't too much trouble.
None at all, really.
Namor sends his regards, and it turns out he wasn't especially attached to the place.
Apparently, he won it gambling with some Danes after the second World War.

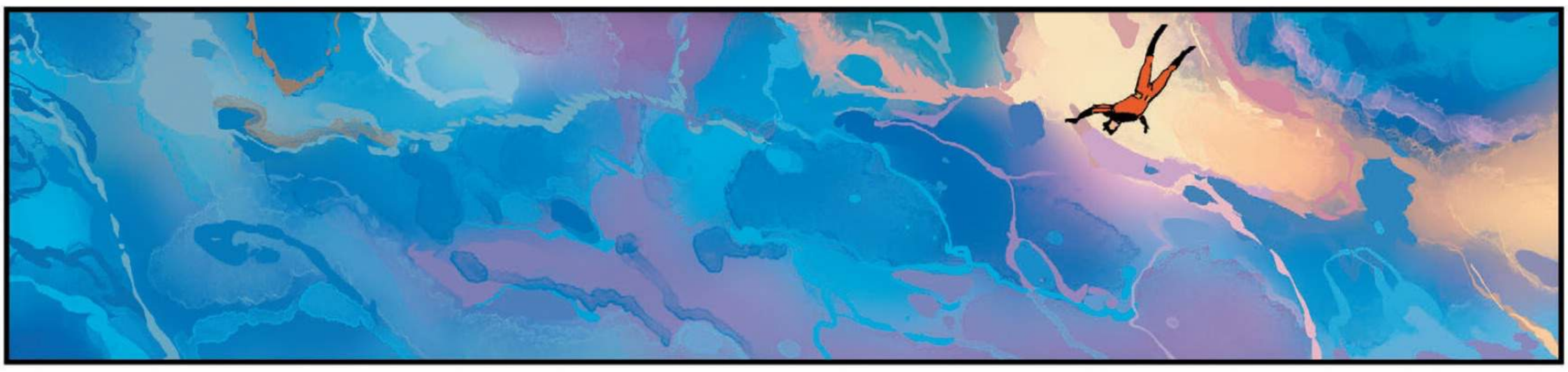
Well, you have your island, Ms. Frost. What are you going to do with it?
Send invitations, of course...
...and then wait to see who shows up.

Chapter 13

# Fire

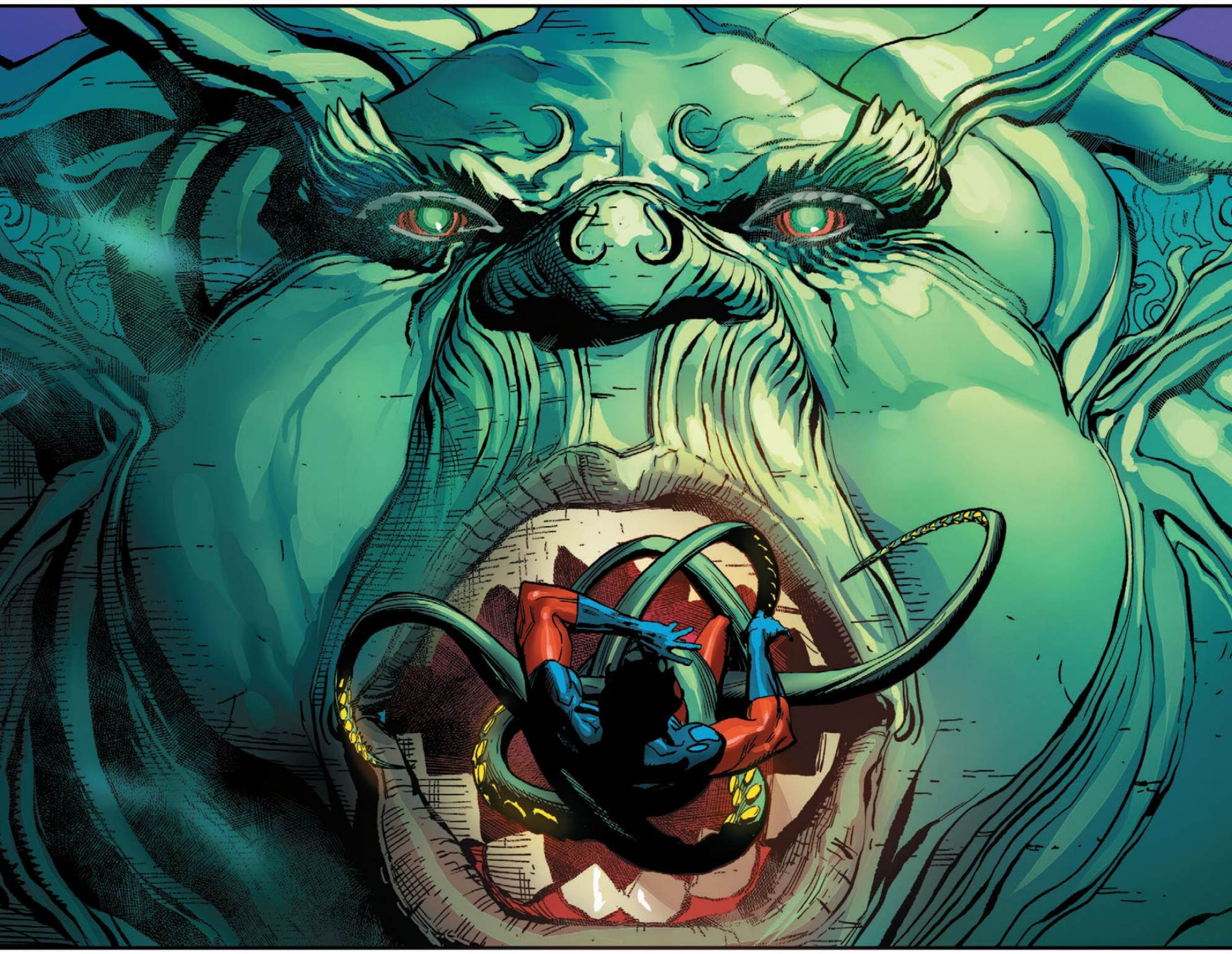
# 13

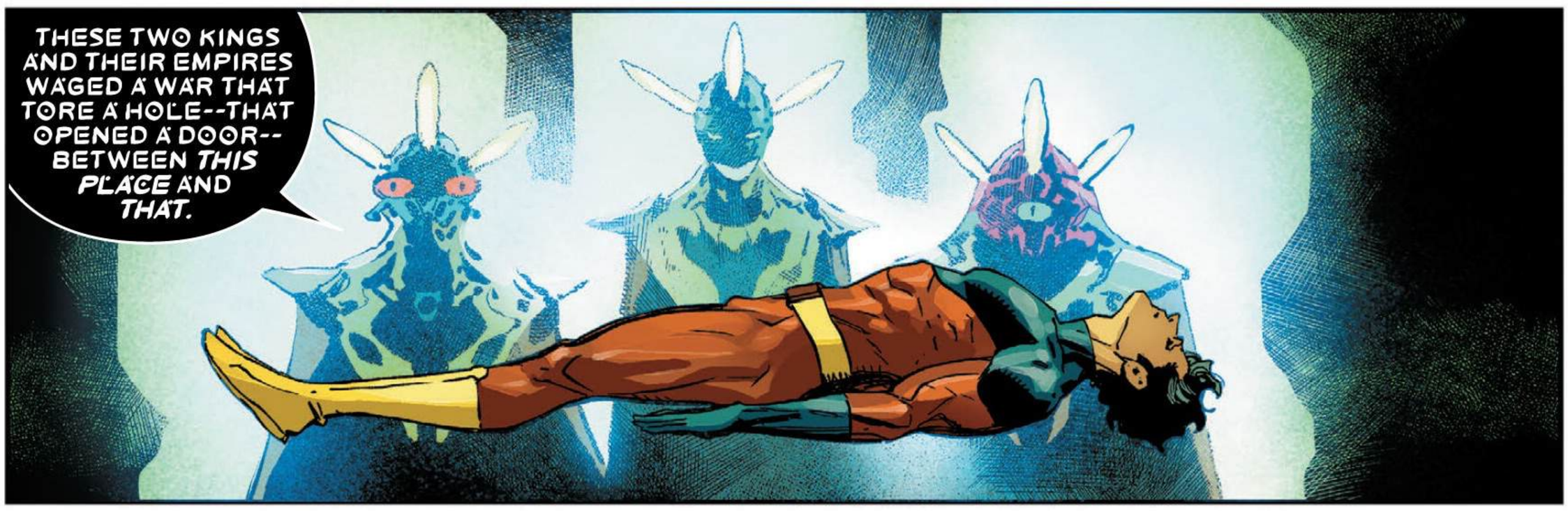

Then.



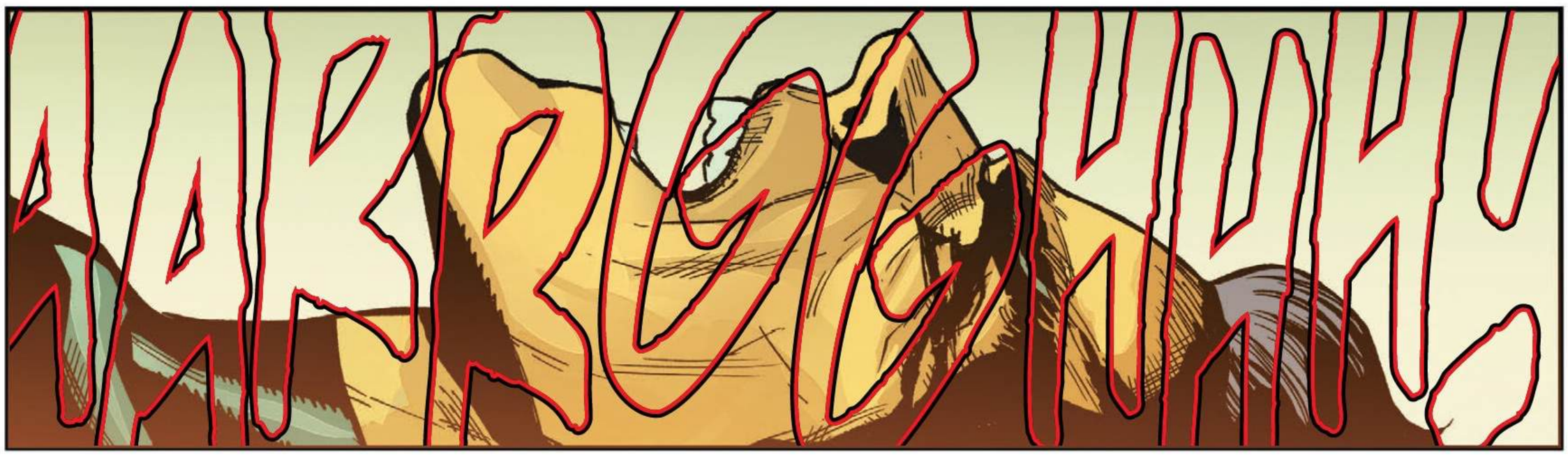
GENTLY...

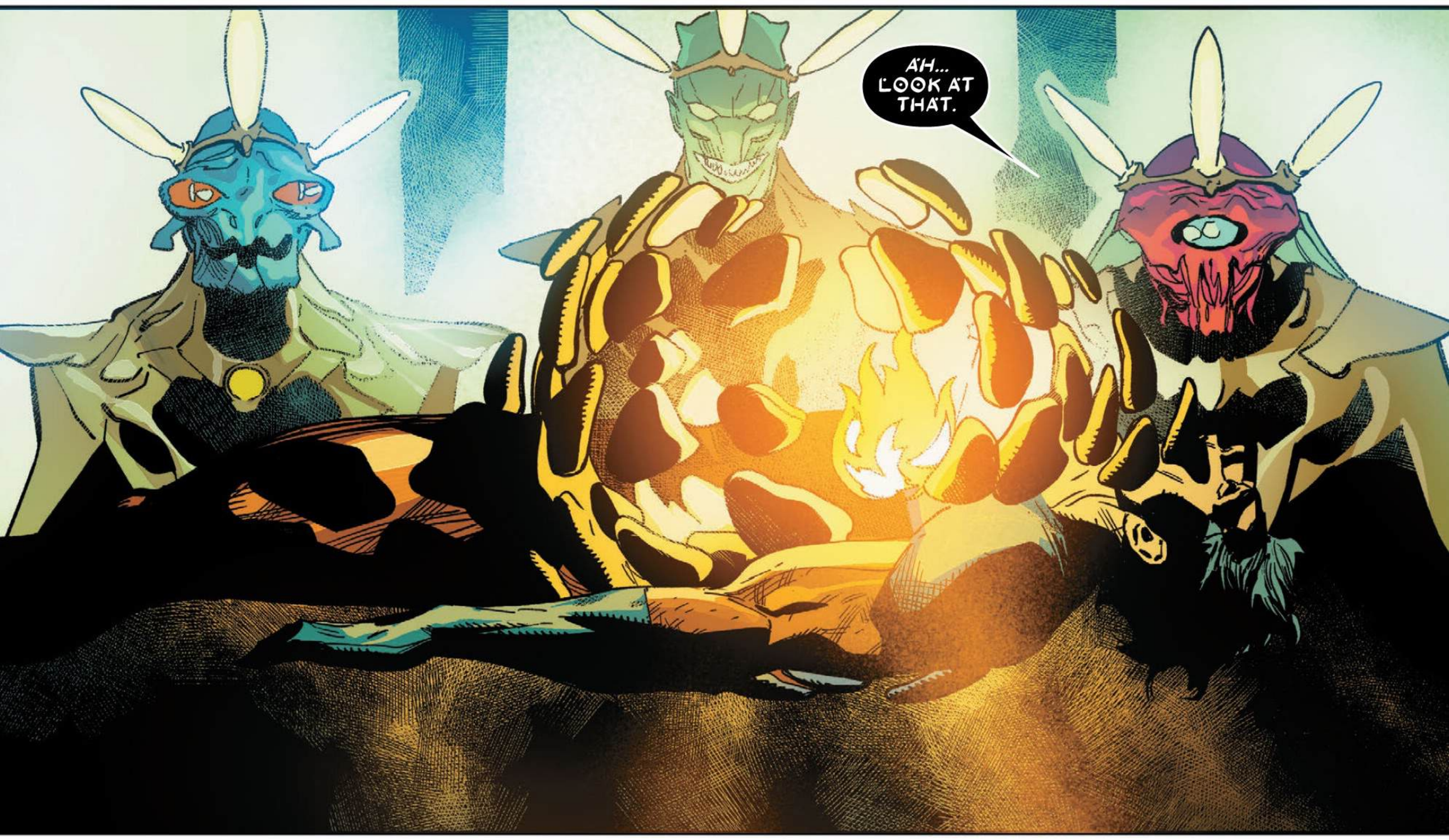
THE CELESTIAL AVATAR ESCAPED-- THAT KING IS LOST TO US.
SO LET'S TAKE A BIT MORE CARE WITH THIS ONE.
HURKK!

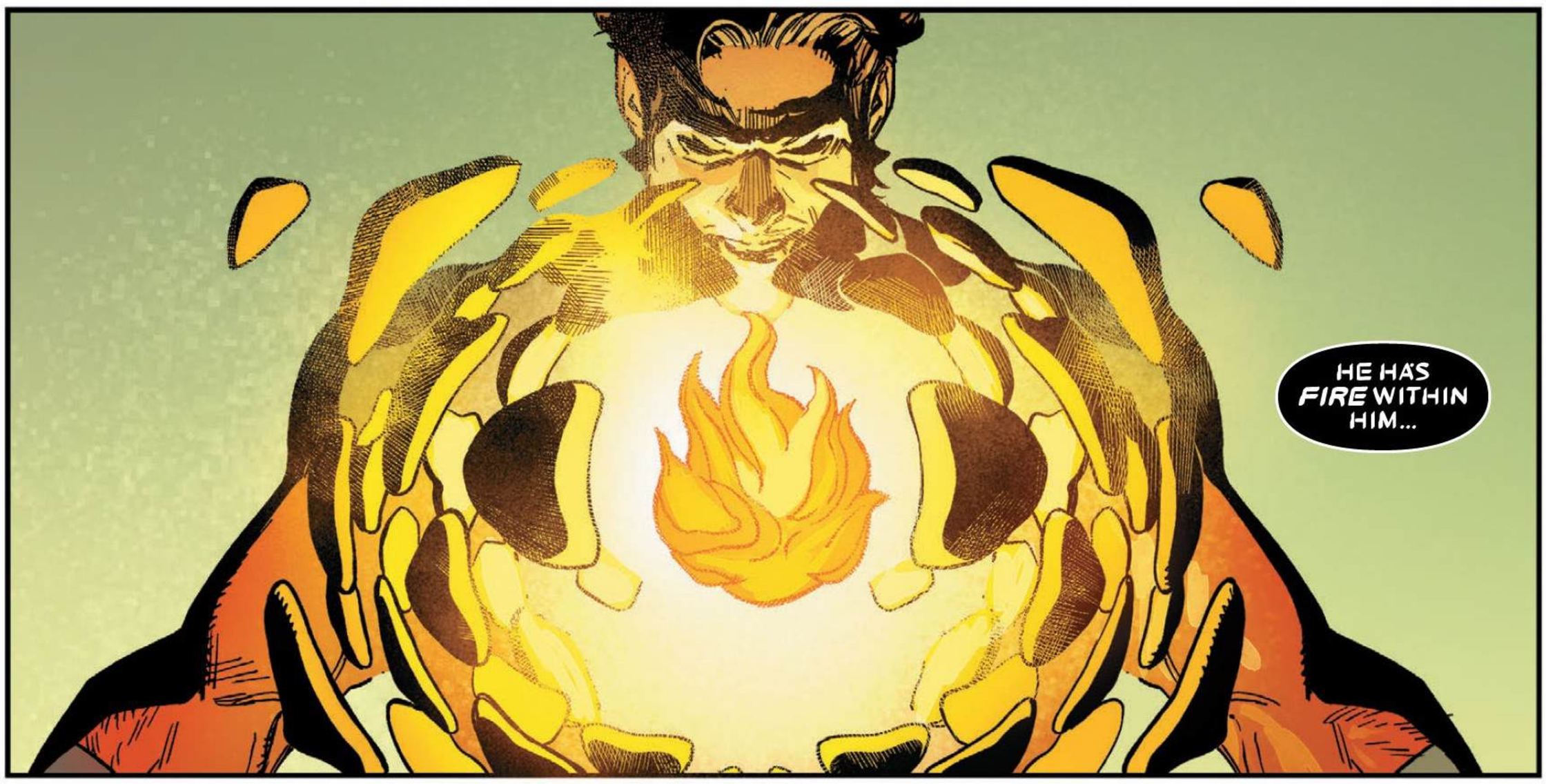


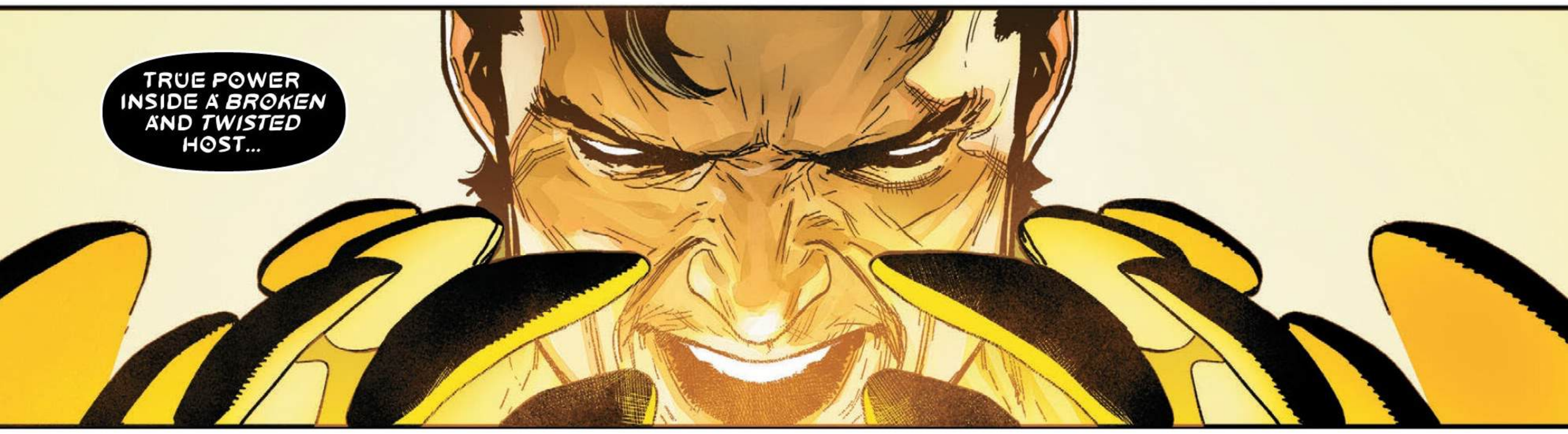

THESE TWO KINGS AND THEIR EMPIRES WAGED A WAR THAT TORE A HOLE--THAT OPENED A DOOR--BETWEEN *THIS PLACE* AND *THAT.*

*I WONDER...WHAT'S A KING WORTH THERE?*
*LET'S SEE, SHALL WE?*

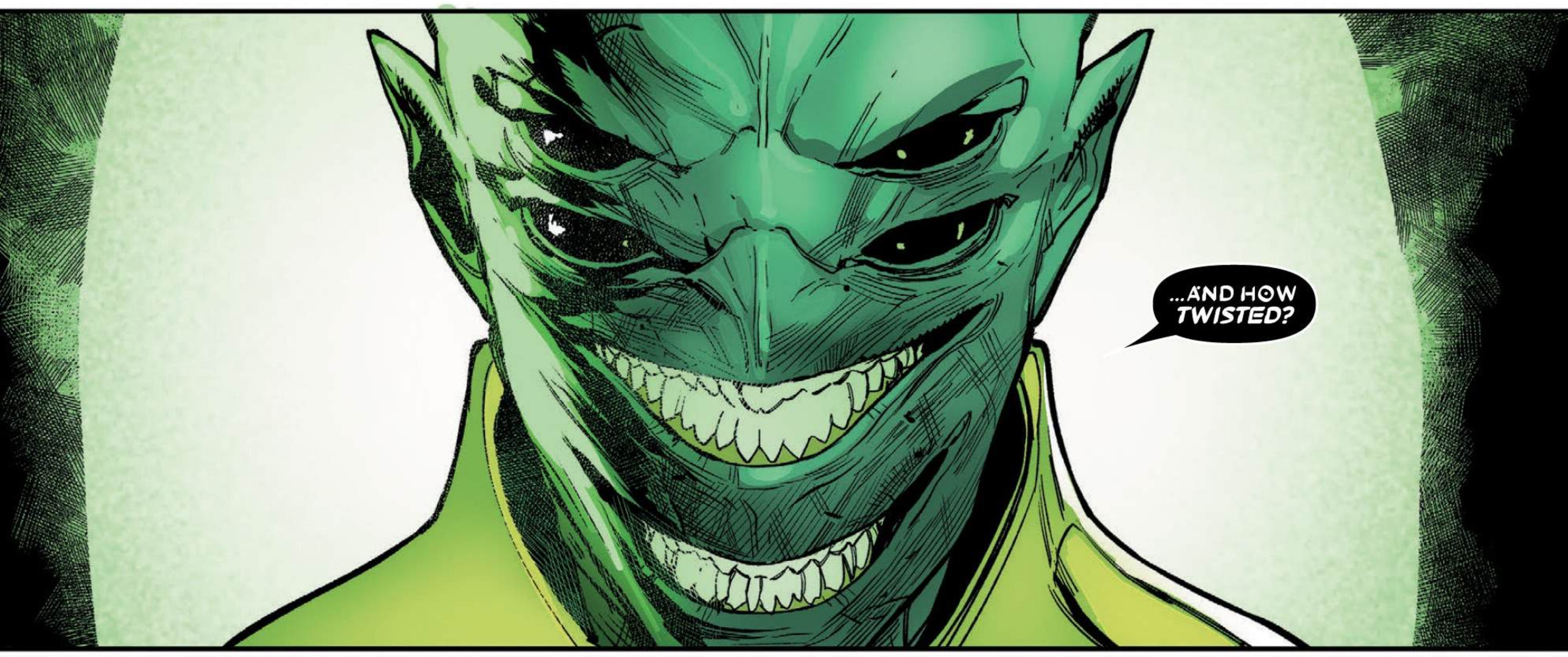

MARGLOROUS

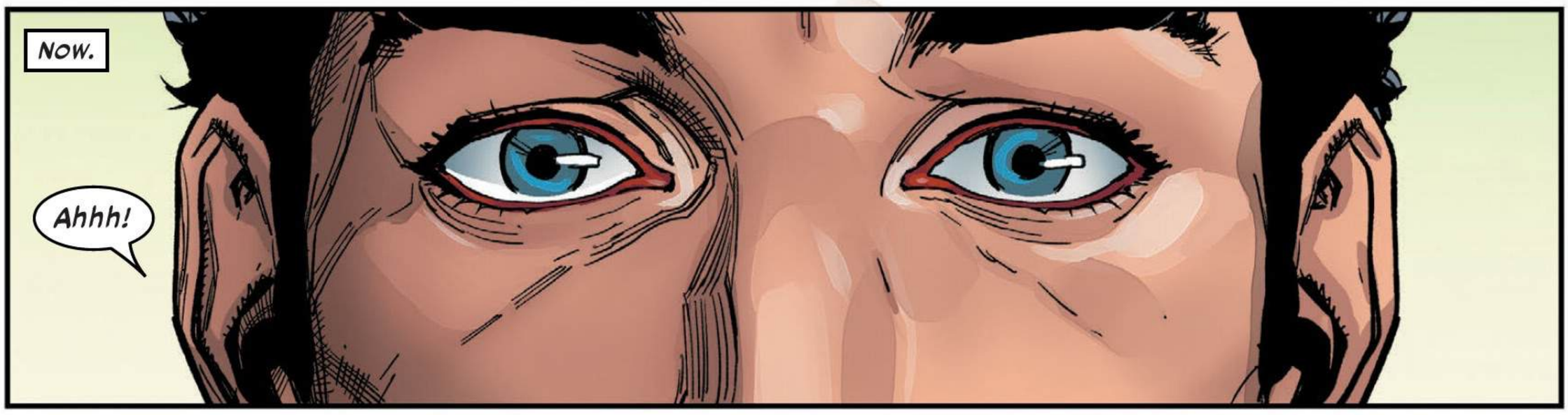

*AH... LOOK AT THAT.*

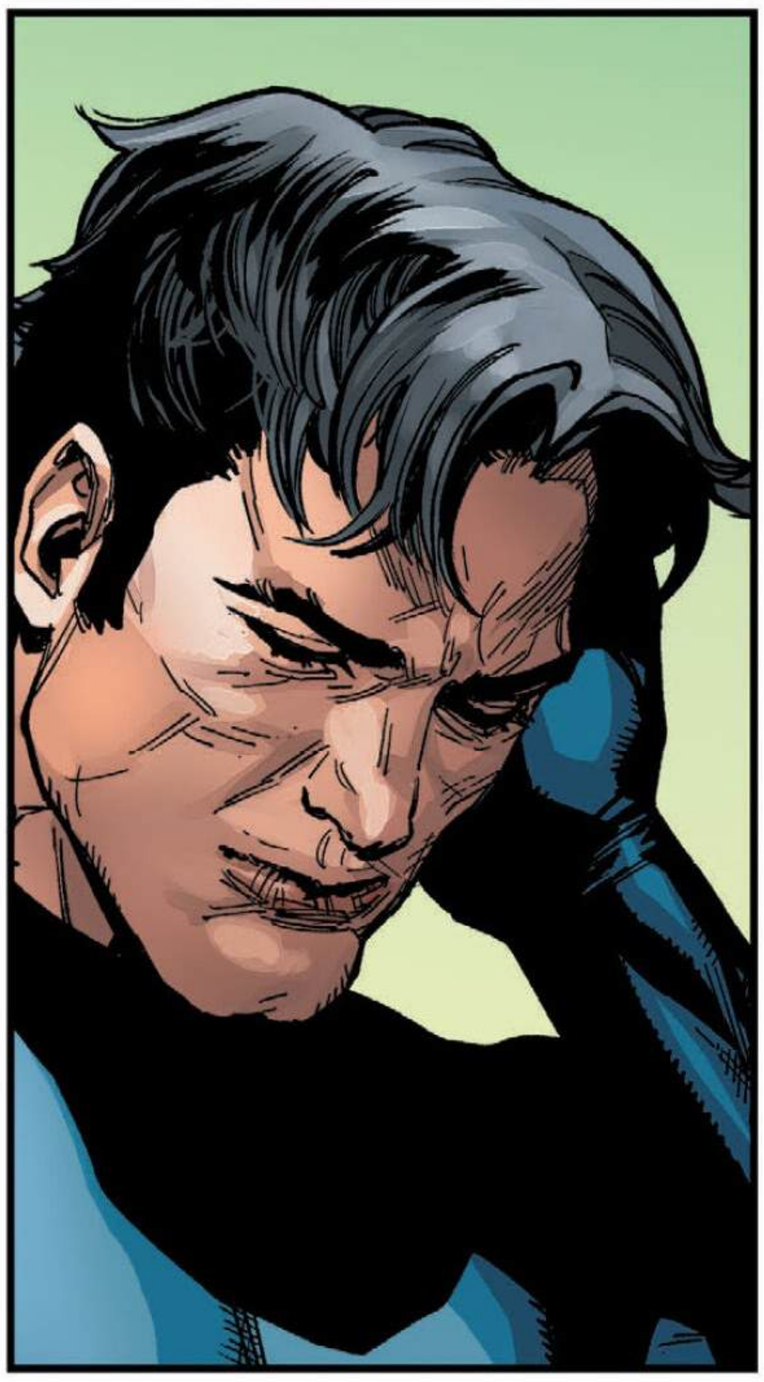

HE HAS FIRE WITHIN HIM...


TRUE POWER INSIDE A BROKEN AND TWISTED HOST...

YES.
BUT HOW BROKEN...

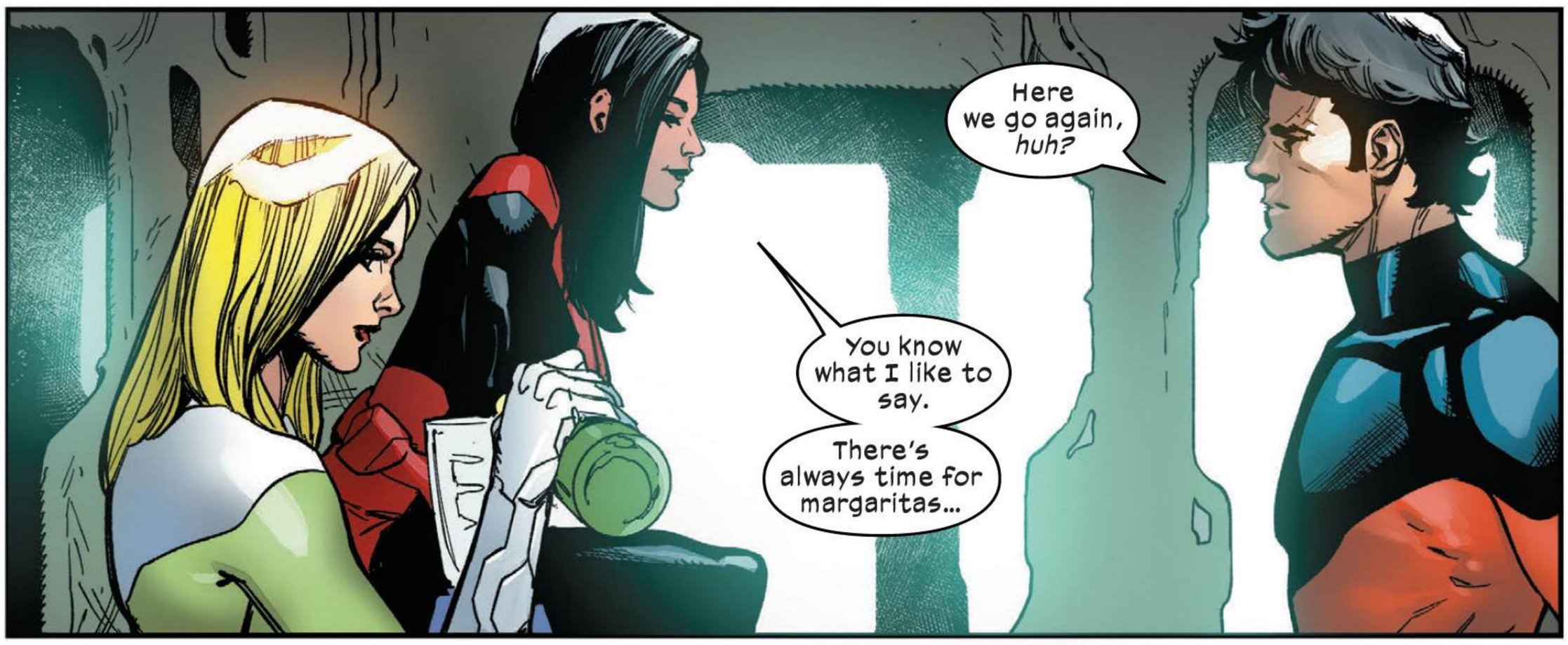

...AND HOW TWISTED?

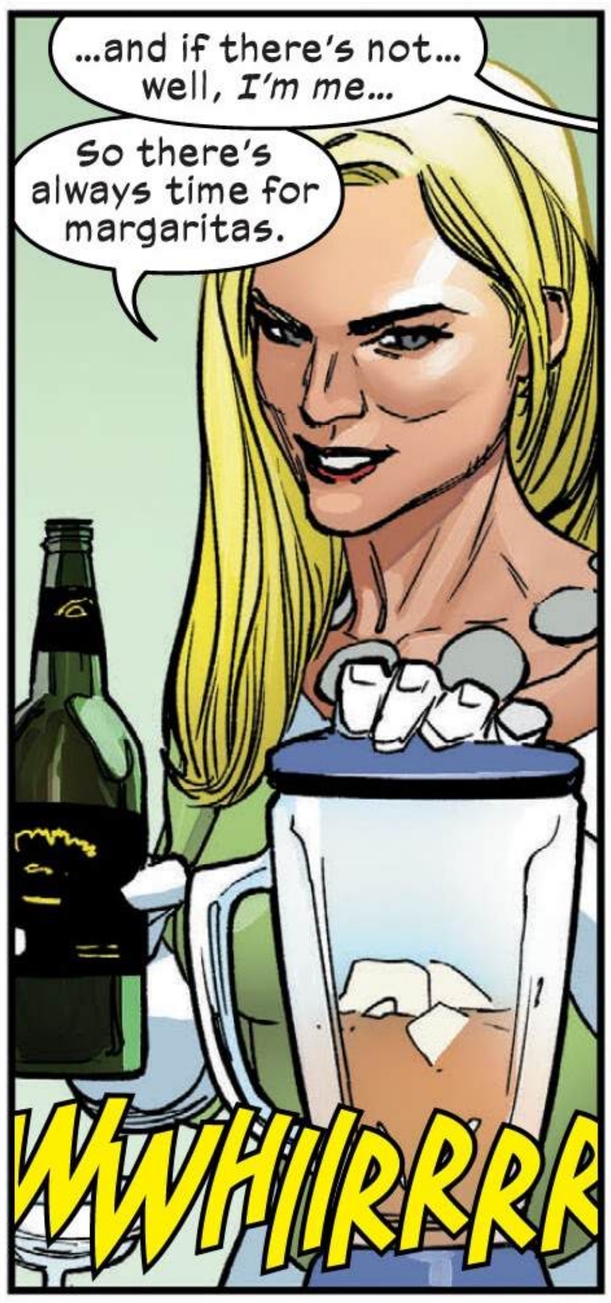

NOW.
Ahhh!



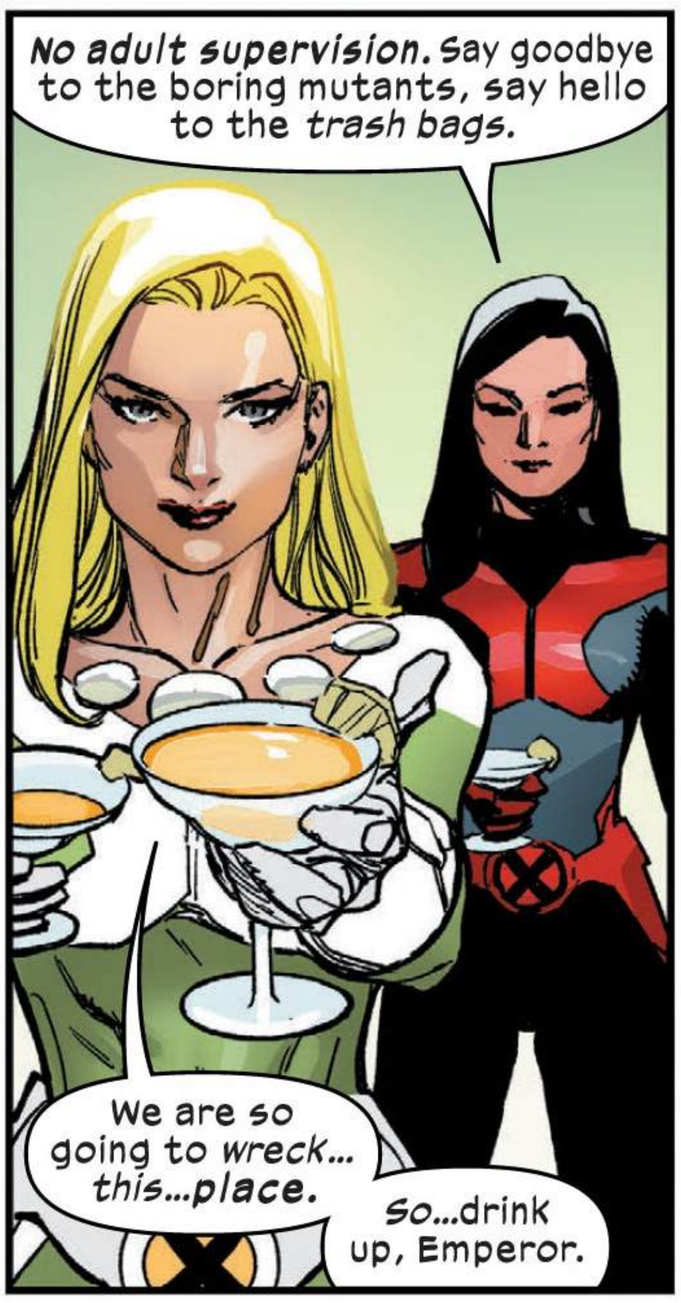
Damn it.

Hey! Look who's up.
Just in time, Emperor.
Don't call him that, *remember?* He doesn't *like it.*
But I like it...and I'm the one making margaritas.


Here we go again, *huh?*
You know what I like to say.
There's always time for margaritas...


...and if there's not... well, *I'm me...*
So there's always time for margaritas.
WWHIRRRR

*Ugh.* Too loud.
Where're Scott and everybody else?
***Gone.*** They took the kids somewhere--*they left you a note, I think*--regardless, you know what that means, don't you?


***No adult supervision.*** Say goodbye to the boring mutants, say hello to the *trash bags.*
We are so going to *wreck... this...place.*
So...drink up, Emperor.

I ***really*** wish you wouldn't call me that.

Ugh! Agh! Ugh!
Brain freeze.
Ugh.
I hate that...

What about you? Not so much?
I don't get that. Never have.

Why not? Oh, I know...
He has a fire burning within him.

...
Guys, I don't know if today is--
Hold that thought, because I've a question you need to answer first...

Are we drinking? Or are we drinking? Because frankly, I wouldn't mind turning things up to ten.
I say eleven, because there are a lot of very hot medium-powered mutants on the island that would love to get down at the Summer House.
I have some ideas I'm noodling on, but I don't want you judging me right now.
Either way, what do you say, Emperor? Party? Or party?

...
I'm going for a walk.

[kra_[0.10]
[koa_[0.10]

[kra_[0.X]
[koa_[0.X]

# EMPYRE

The Kree and Skrull empires have united under Emperor Hulkling to fight a common enemy: the Celestial Messiah Quoi and his plant-like Cotati, who have claimed Earth's Moon as their own!

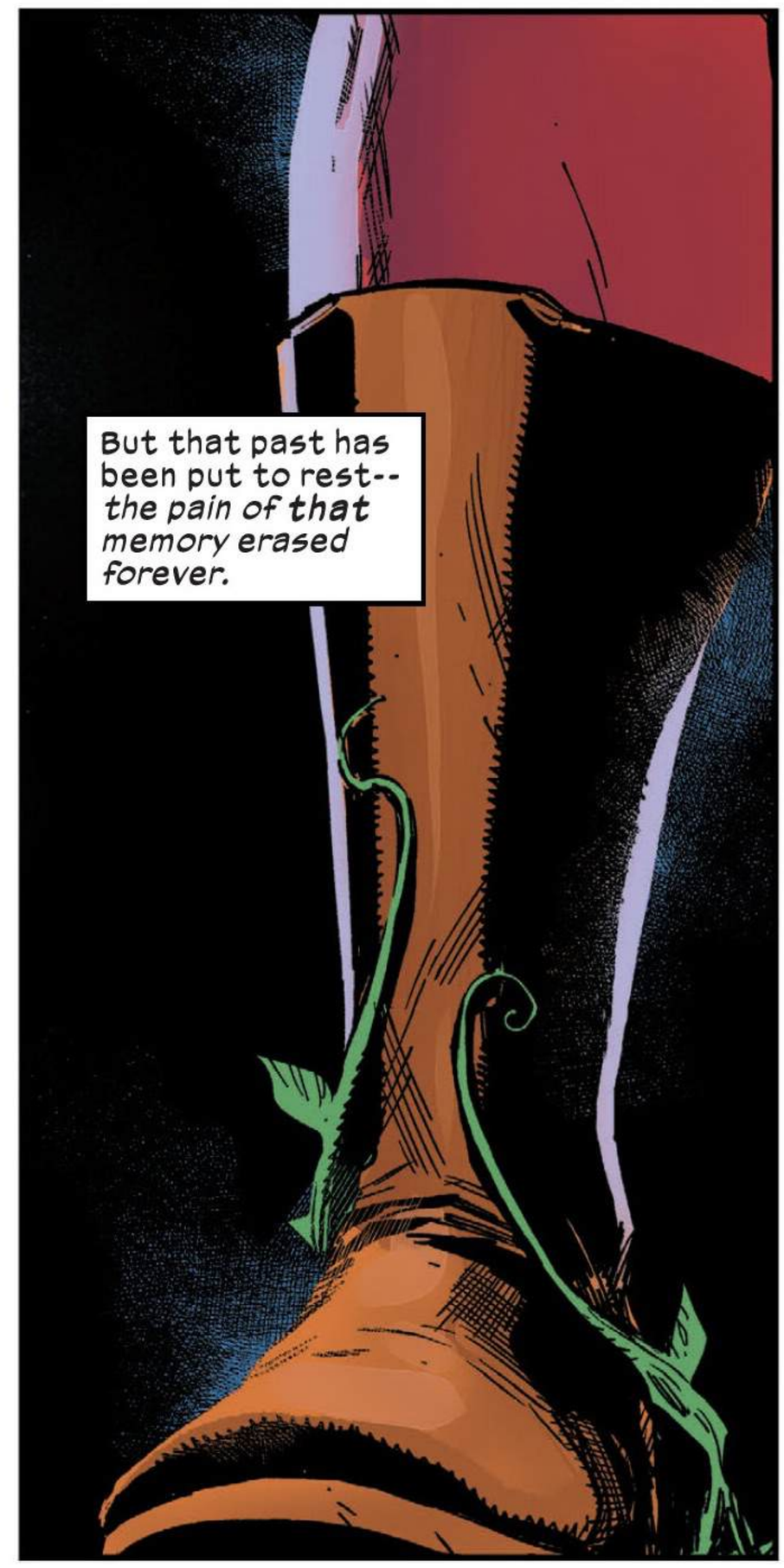
Huh. Who do we know who lives on the Moon?

Vulcan

Petra

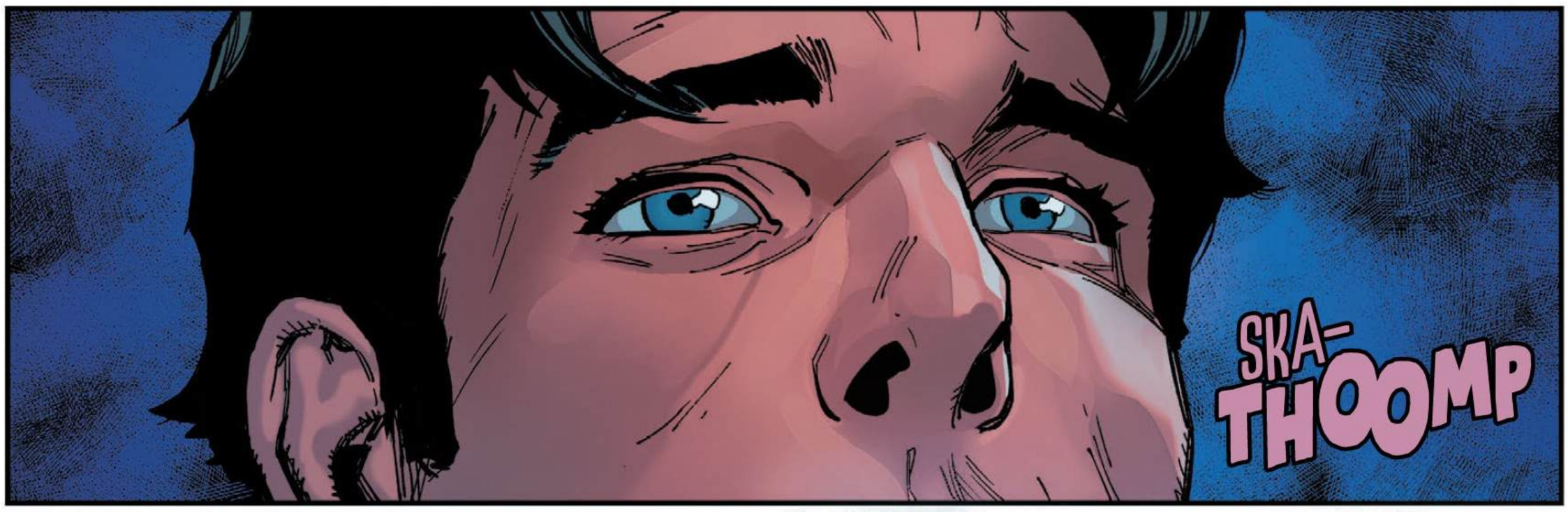
Sway

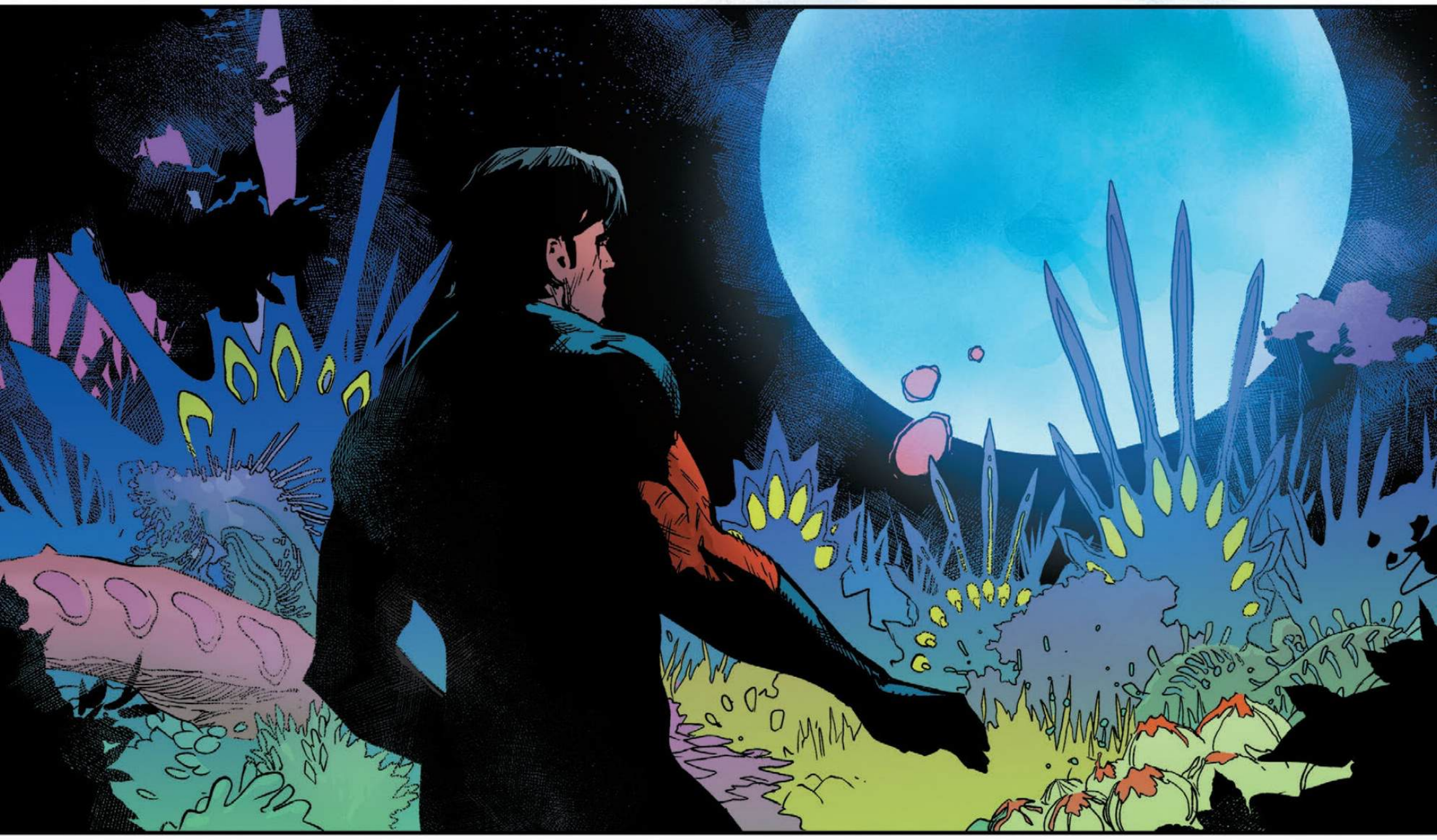
Mutants live on the Moon in the Summer House.

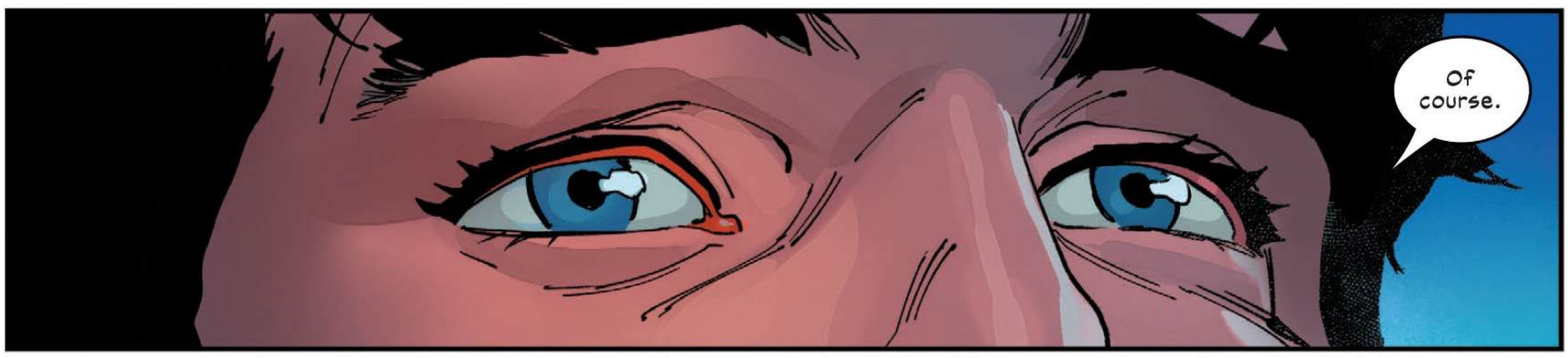


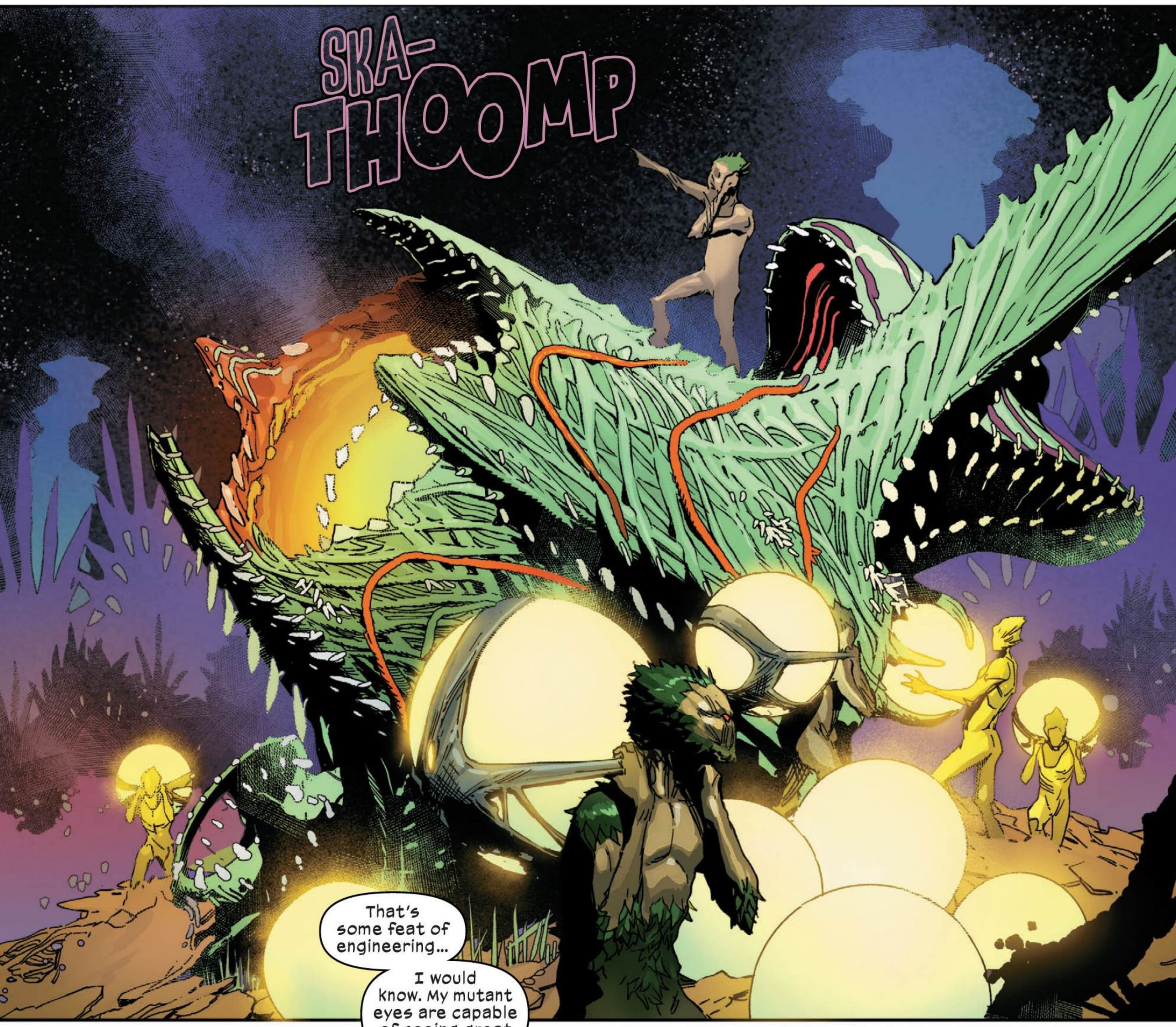
Now, something new has taken root there.

SKA-THOOMP
SKA-THOOMP


SKA-THOOMP

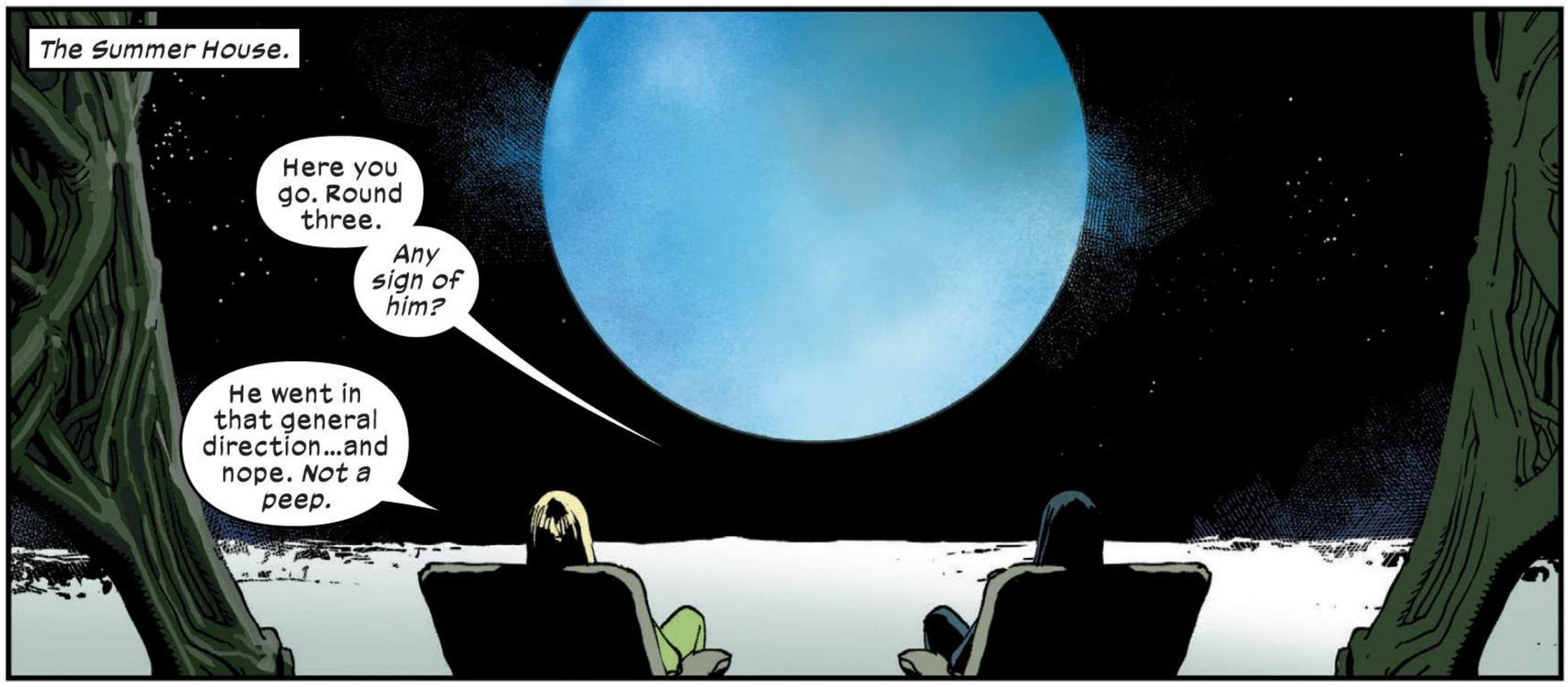


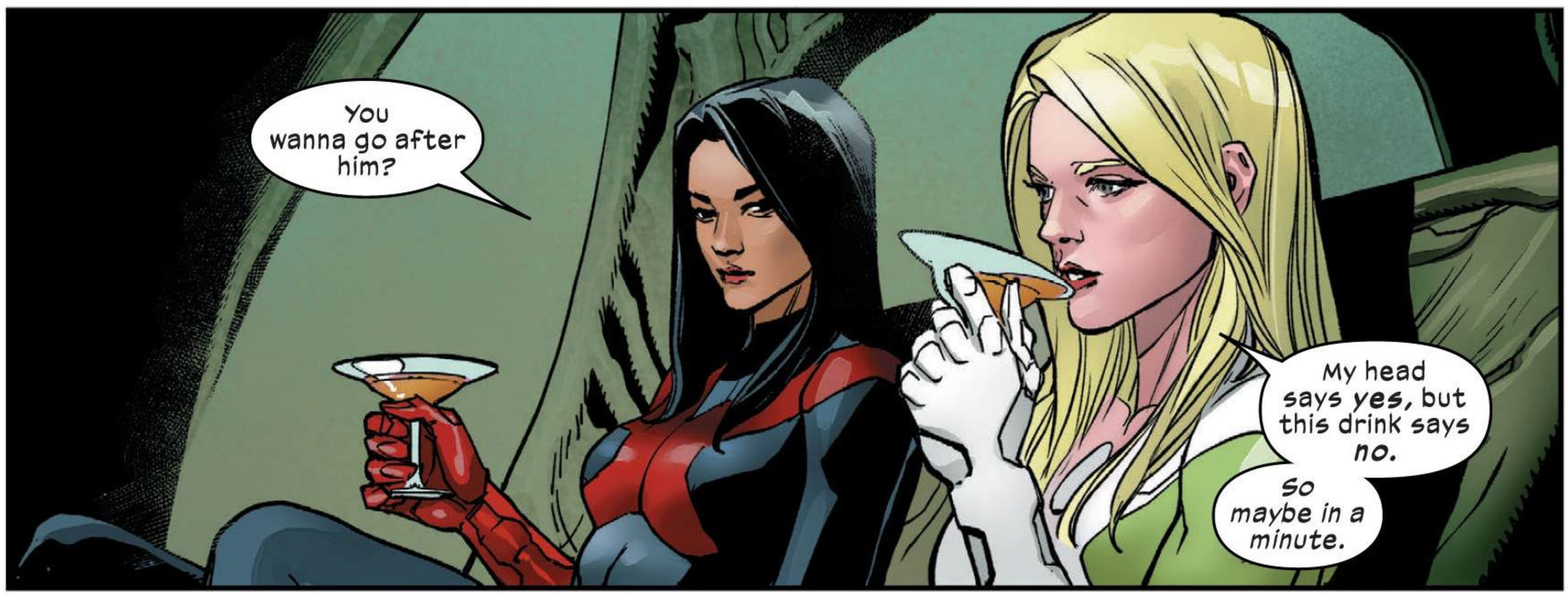

Of course.

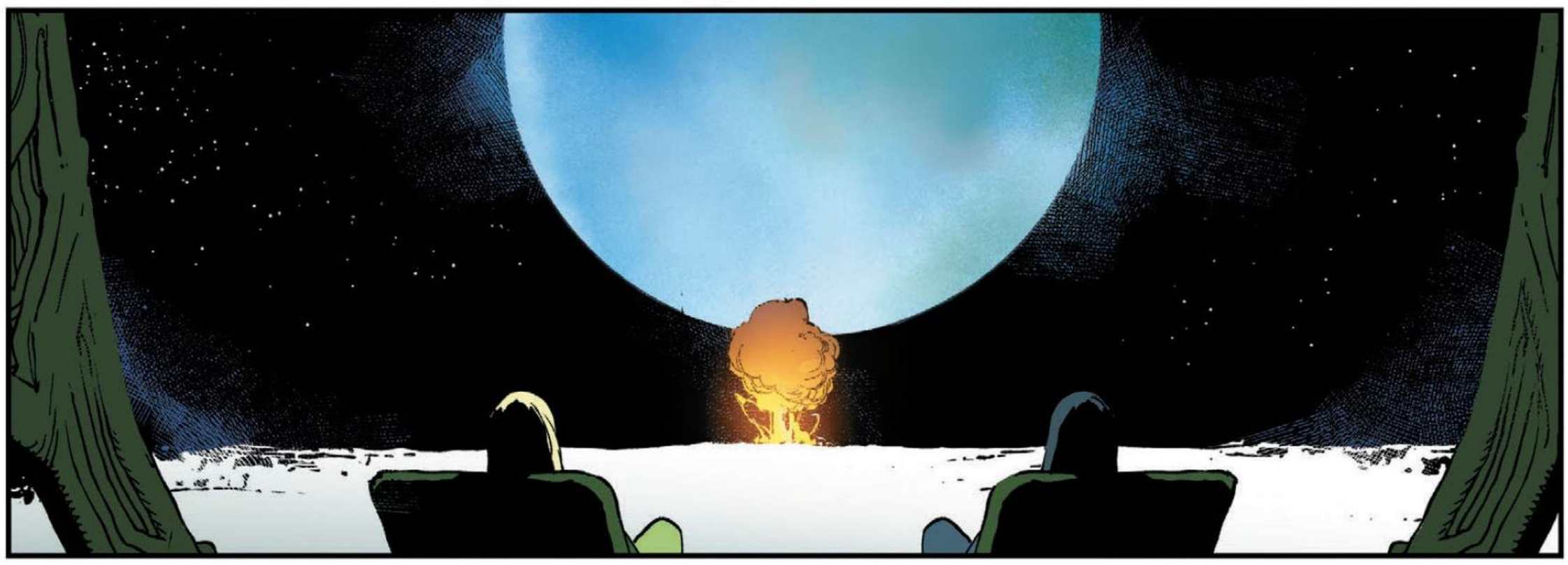

SKA-THOOMP
That's some feat of engineering...
I would know. My mutant eyes are capable of seeing great things...

I am, however, not gifted with telescopic vision. And God knows I'm not known for accurately judging the trajectory of things...
So I'm going to assume that Earth is your... *general target* and that you're doing your best not to hit ***the island*** my people call ***home.***
Because that would be ***a mistake.*** You're going to want to *steer clear* of Krakoa.

Saying that, I feel the need to tell you...
All this... violence you're doing...
It never ends well.
Believe me.
Oh, I know. I understand where it comes from. You look at humanity and find them wanting.
You look at what they're capable of--and there's so little good to balance out all that evil...
I can see why you want to destroy them.
I really can.
But once you start down that road...
Have you considered what that makes you?


The Summer House.
Here you go. Round three.
Any sign of him?
He went in that general direction...and nope. Not a peep.

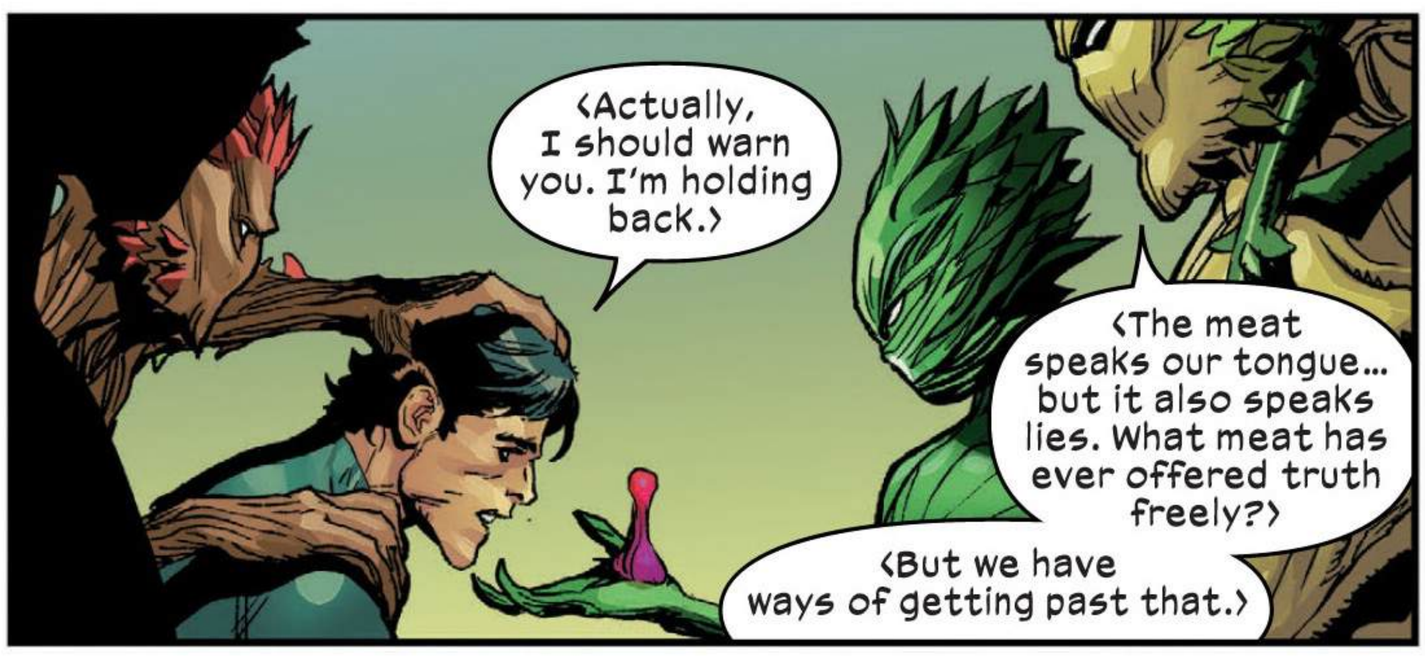

You wanna go after him?
My head says yes, but this drink says no.
So maybe in a minute.



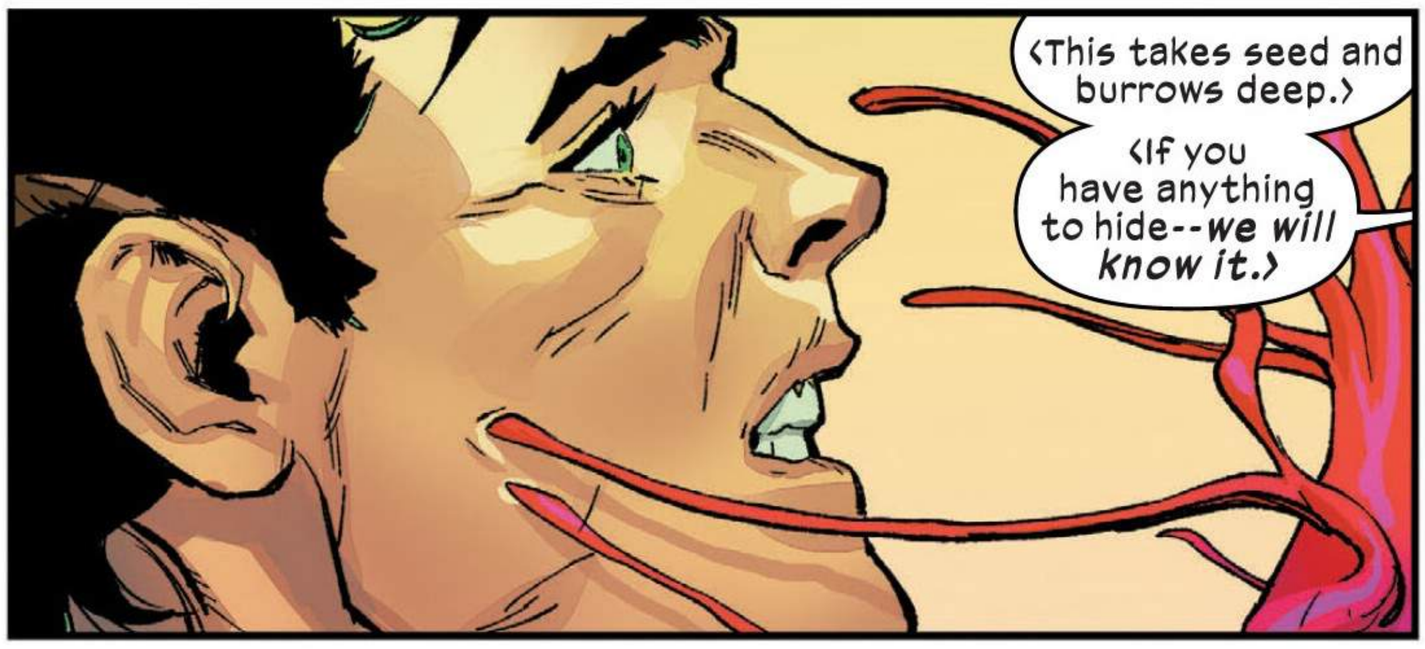
Ah. Hello, Emperor.
What about now?
Now my head says hell no and my drink says I'm delicious, please finish me.
What do you think?
We'll give it a minute.

‹We've subdued him...but at great cost.›
‹This one fights like a wounded beast.›

‹Let them fight all they want. Let them build their buildings and mine the earth--*the jungle always returns.*›
‹And the ***flesh*** is always ***weak.***›

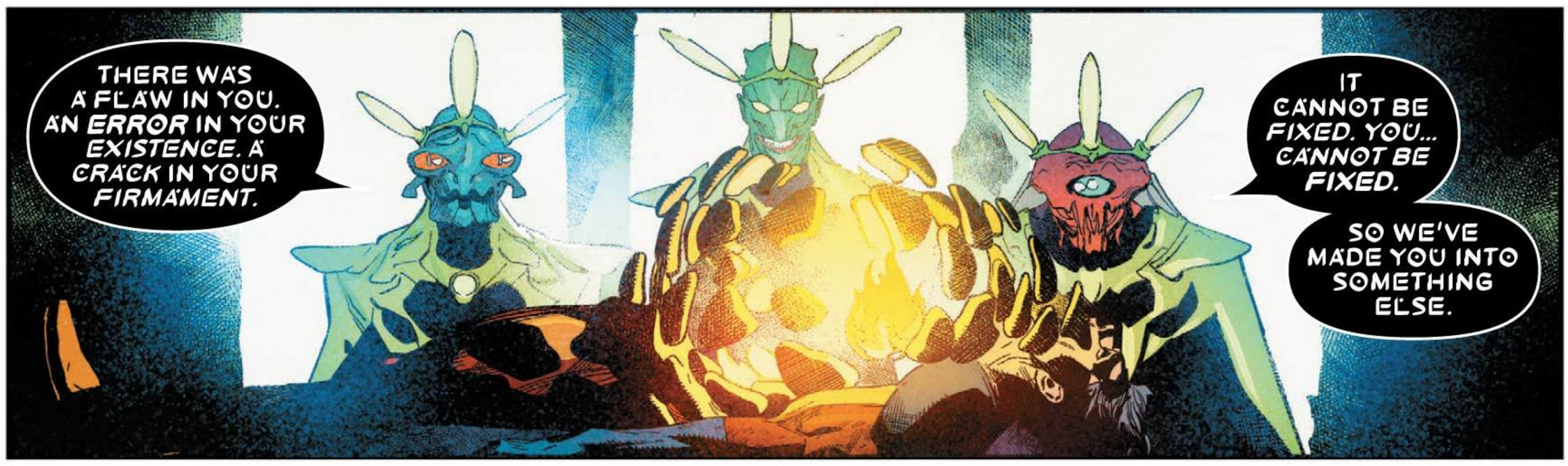

‹Actually, I should warn you. I'm holding back.›
‹The meat speaks our tongue... but it also speaks lies. What meat has ever offered truth freely?›
‹But we have ways of getting past that.›

What are you doing?
*Don't...*


‹This takes seed and burrows deep.›
‹If you have anything to hide--***we will know it.***›

AAIIIEEEEEEE!
THERE! IT'S DONE.

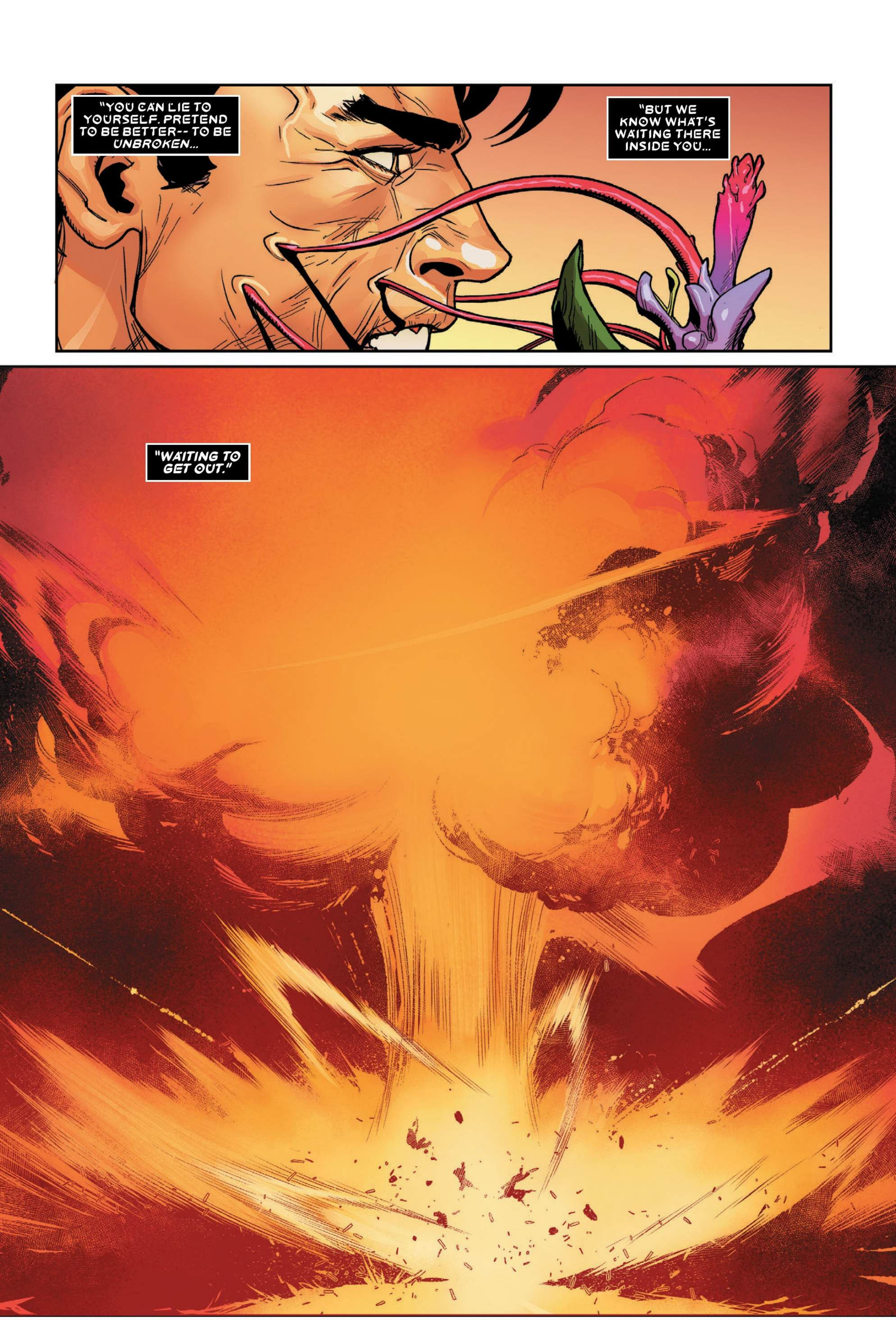
My mind...my mind, it...
What have you done to me?


THERE WAS A FLAW IN YOU. AN ERROR IN YOUR EXISTENCE. A CRACK IN YOUR FIRMAMENT.
IT CANNOT BE FIXED. YOU... CANNOT BE FIXED.
SO WE'VE MADE YOU INTO SOMETHING ELSE.

A flaw?
What flaw?

YOU HAVE GOOD IN YOU. SOME SMALL MICROSCOPIC MEASURE THAT--GIVEN FERTILE SOIL--COULD GROW INTO SOMETHING MORE. IT'S A CANCER...
AND THAT IS UNACCEPTABLE FOR THE WORK WE HAVE SET IN FRONT OF YOU.
SO WE'VE SEPARATED THE TWO...
INSIDE--HIDDEN UNDER A THIN LAYER OF THAT GOOD--IS THE BEAUTIFUL BROKEN CREATURE YOU ARE.

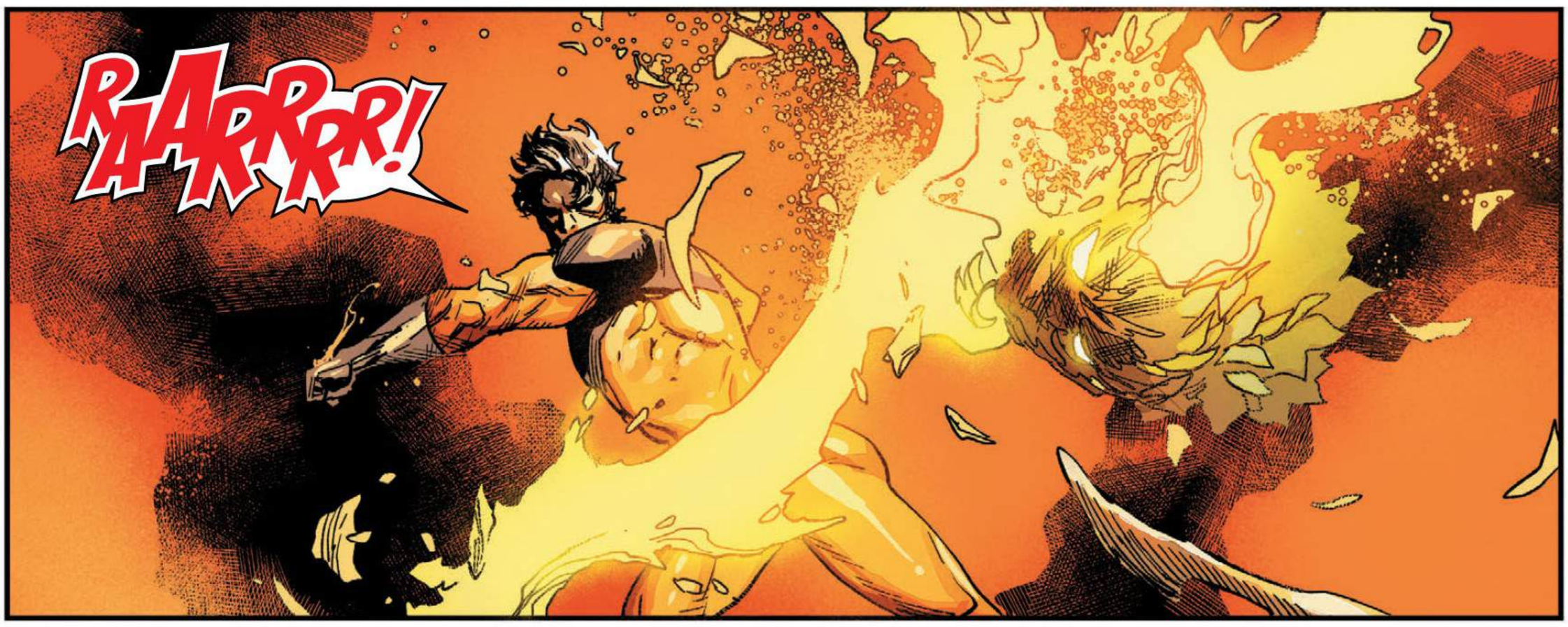
WE'RE GOING TO RELEASE YOU BACK INTO YOUR UNIVERSE.
THEY WILL SEE YOU AS CHANGED--REBORN, HEALTHY AND WHOLE. BUT THAT IS JUST A SHELL.
UNDERNEATH IT--BURIED ALIVE IN A SHALLOW GRAVE--IS THE REAL YOU.


"YOU CAN LIE TO YOURSELF. PRETEND TO BE BETTER-- TO BE UNBROKEN...
"BUT WE KNOW WHAT'S WAITING THERE INSIDE YOU...
"WAITING TO GET OUT."

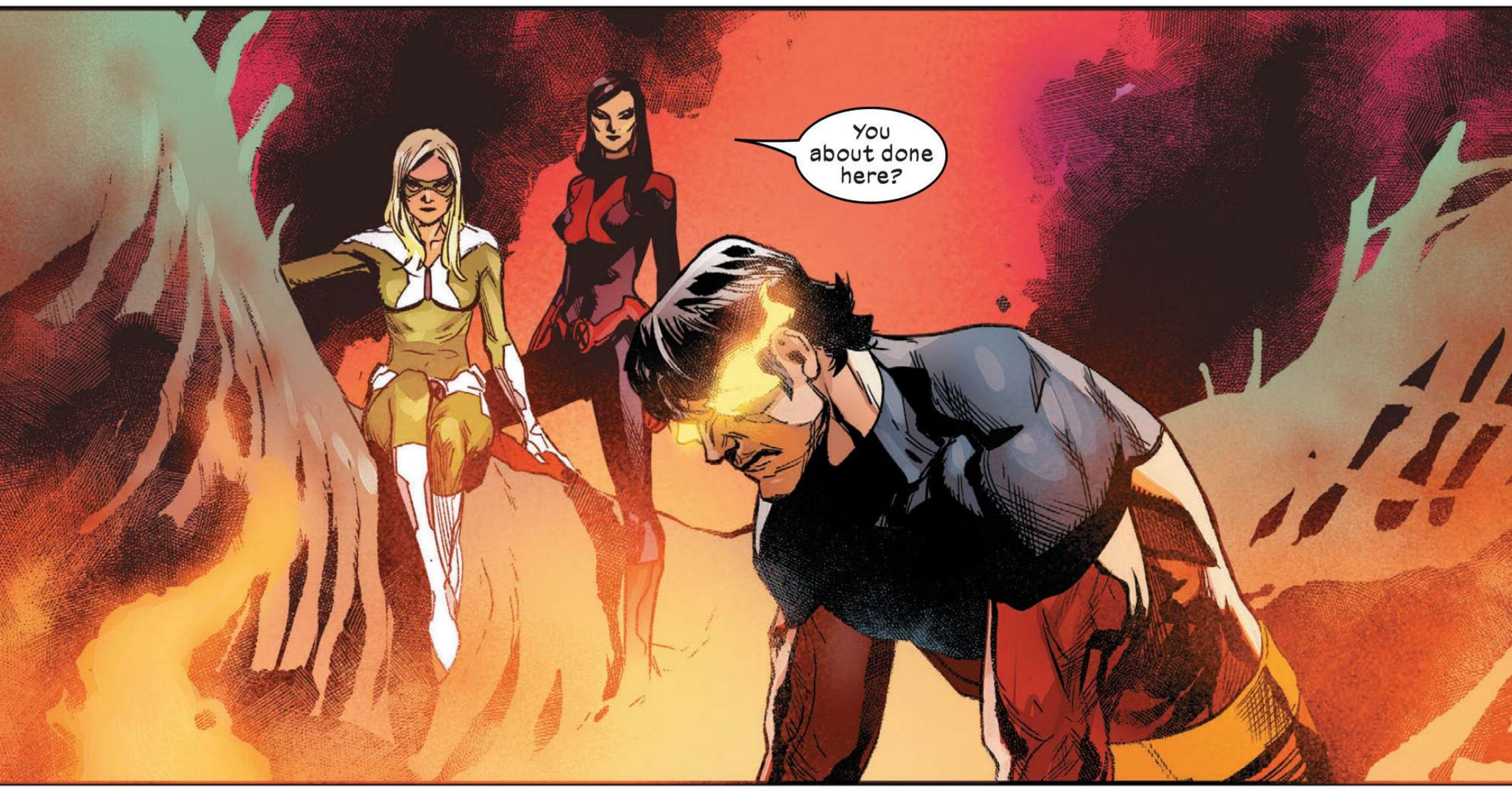
RAARRRR!
‹He's mad! He's lost his mind!›
‹He's going to kill us all!›

‹You wanted truth? Well, this is a hard truth.›
‹You're going to die here today.›
‹This is but a season.›
‹A passing from one to the next.›

‹We will take seed.›
‹And return one day.›


RAARRRR!

Hey there, Emperor.


You about done here?

I... I...

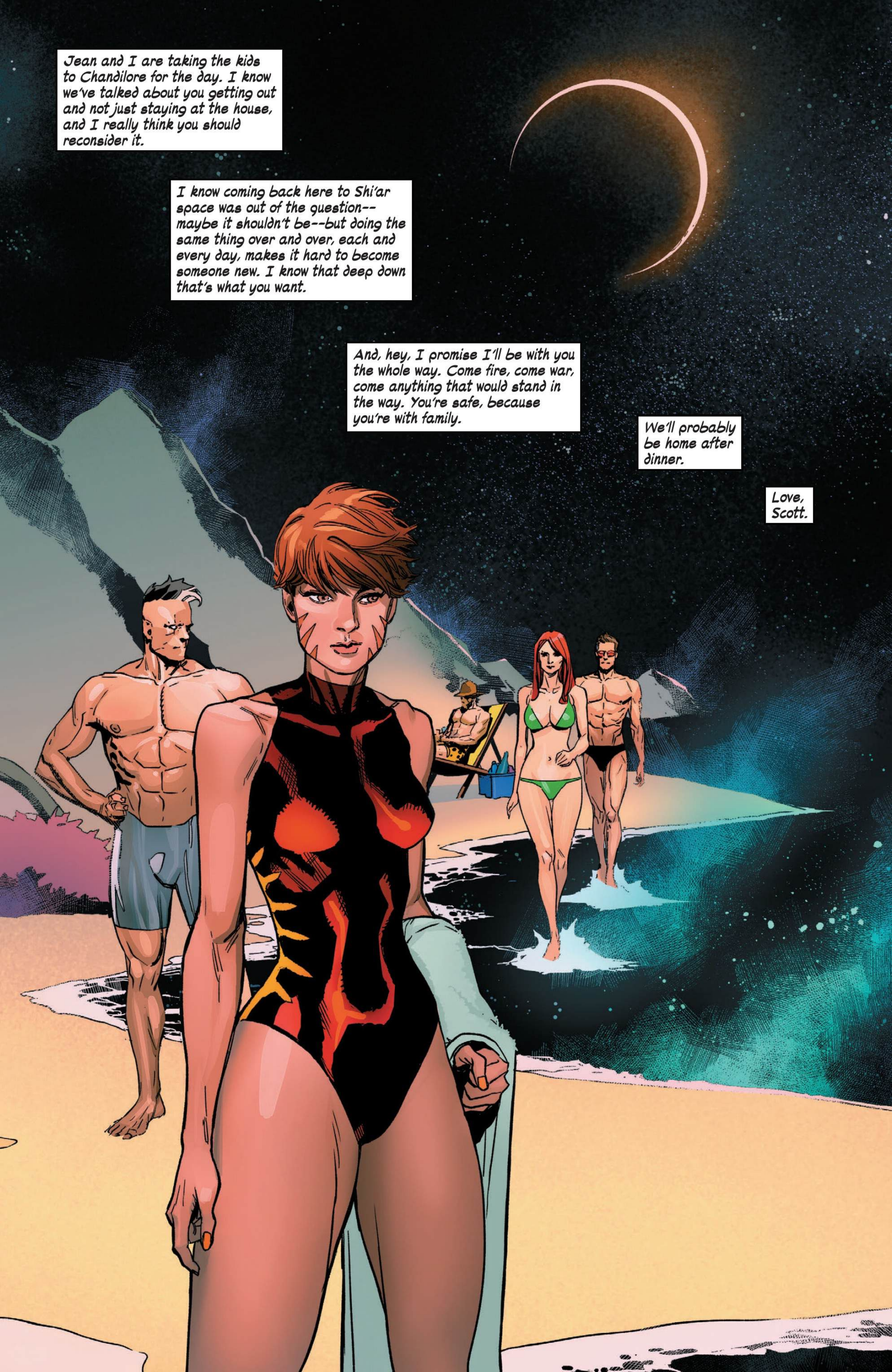
It's okay, Gabriel.
It's over.
I...

I could break this moon in half if I wanted.
I...
I don't want to be *this way.*

We know.
So why don't we get out of here?
Hey... I can make us a drink, Gabriel.
What do you say?

...
Okay. Let's go home.

Gabriel, You were asleep, so I didn't want to wake you...

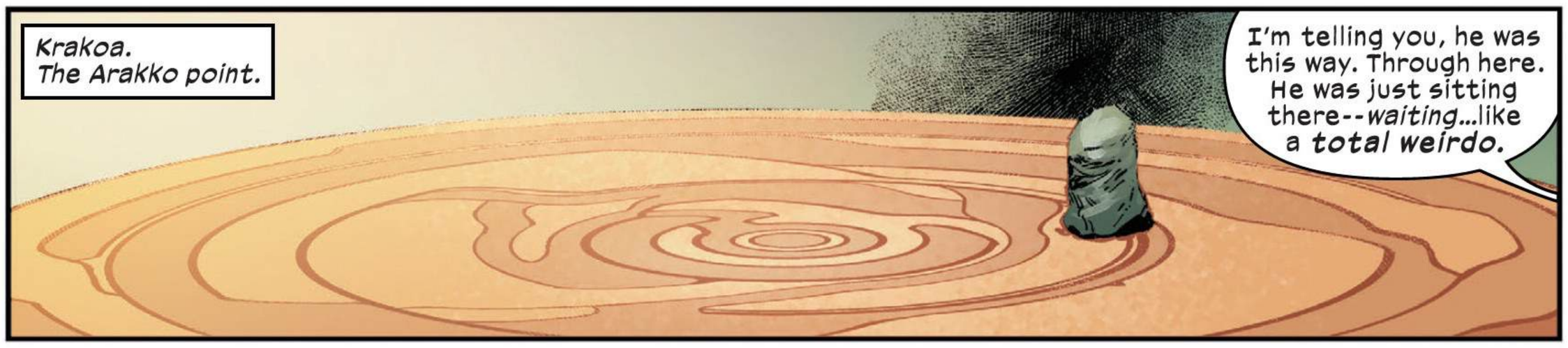

Jean and I are taking the kids to Chandilore for the day. I know we've talked about you getting out and not just staying at the house, and I really think you should reconsider it.
I know coming back here to Shi'ar space was out of the question--maybe it shouldn't be--but doing the same thing over and over, each and every day, makes it hard to become someone new. I know that deep down that's what you want.
And, hey, I promise I'll be with you the whole way. Come fire, come war, come anything that would stand in the way. You're safe, because you're with family.
We'll probably be home after dinner.
Love, Scott.

Epilogue.
‹General!›
‹General! We've lost the entire sunward node.›
‹How?›
‹We're unsure. It was completely consumed-- atomized.›
‹Were there no survivors?›
‹One. But he quickly succumbed to his injuries.›
‹Before he died, he pointed to Earth and muttered a single word. Over and over until he died...›
‹What was it?›
‹"Krakoa."›

RAIN

# One War, One Mutant

# 14



"Just like I said. ***Total weirdo.***"

Hello, friends.

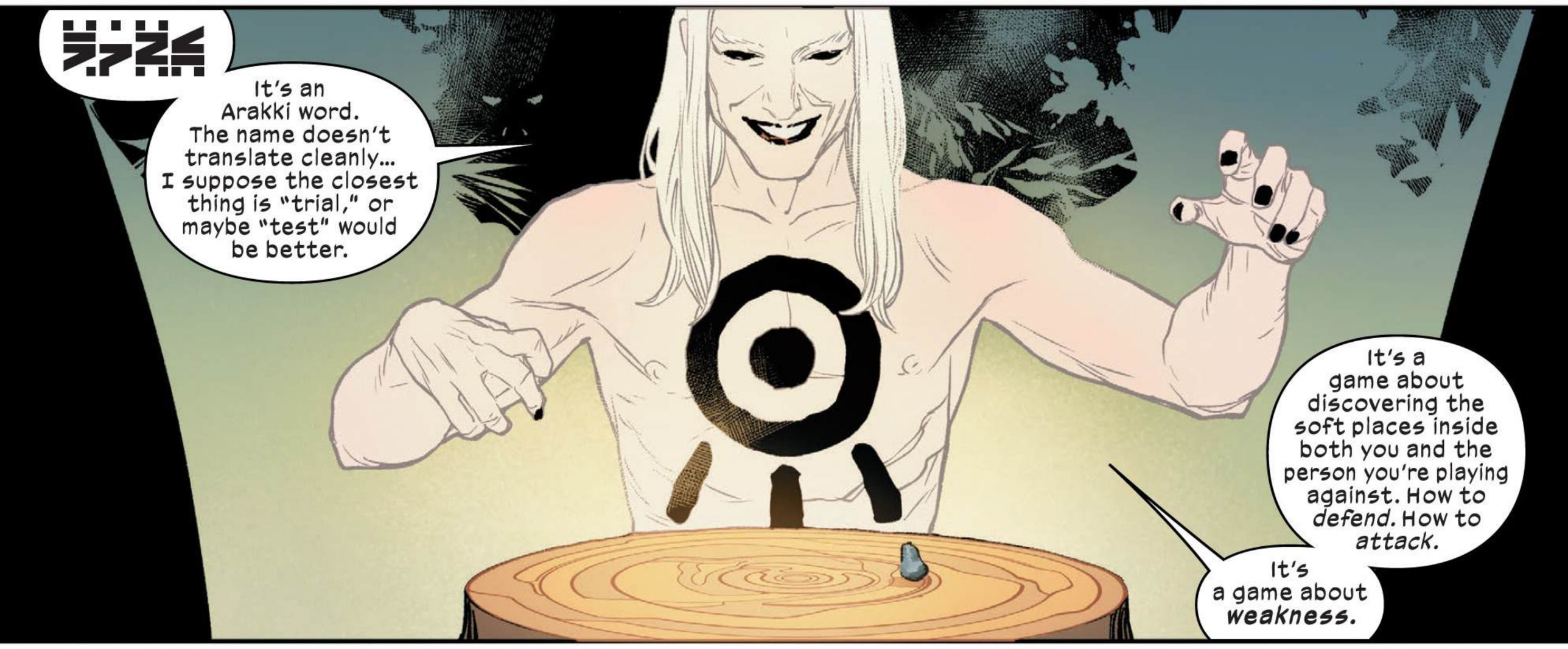
Uh, hi.

So what are you doing here? Meditating, or... Heeeey...
Is that a *game?* It looks like a ***game.***

It *is* a game. A game of Arakko. I learned to play it as a child, but it's certainly not just a game for children.
I've played it many, many times.

*How's it work?*

That depends on the player, actually. Each game is adaptive--*it changes.* You can play with one player--*as I was getting ready to*--but it's better with two.
What's it called?


It's an Arakki word. The name doesn't translate cleanly... I suppose the closest thing is "trial," or maybe "test" would be better.
It's a game about discovering the soft places inside both you and the person you're playing against. How to *defend.* How to *attack.*
It's a game about ***weakness.***

What if you don't have any?

Yes. That's how it *starts.*

Would you like to play, friend?

It's okay to refuse. *Many do.*

...

I'll play.

Excellent. But one word of caution.

Once the game begins, we do not stop until it ends.

I've missed many a meal this way.

Sure. Okay.

How do we start?

Choose a piece...

*Whoa.*

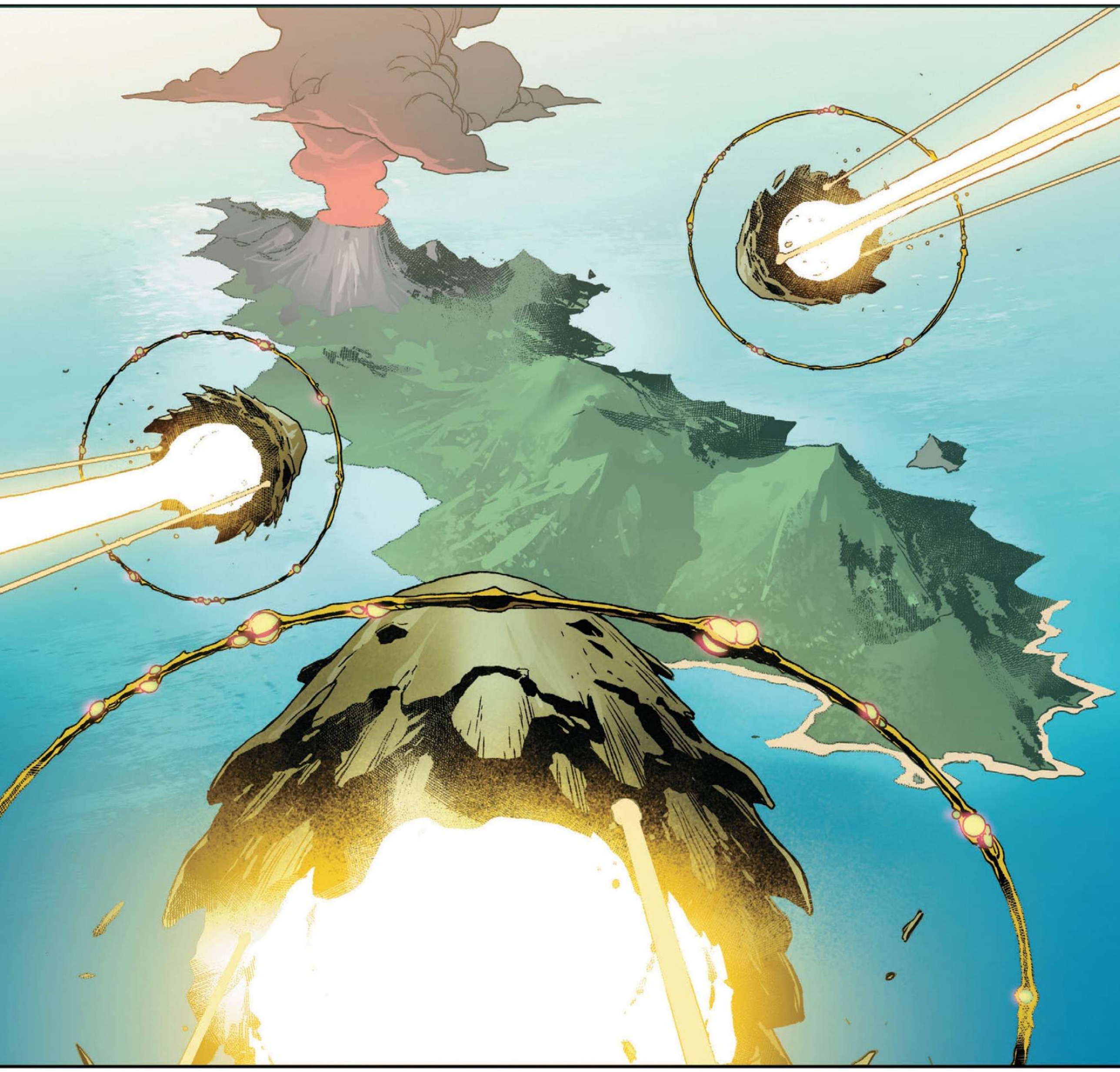
That's... different.

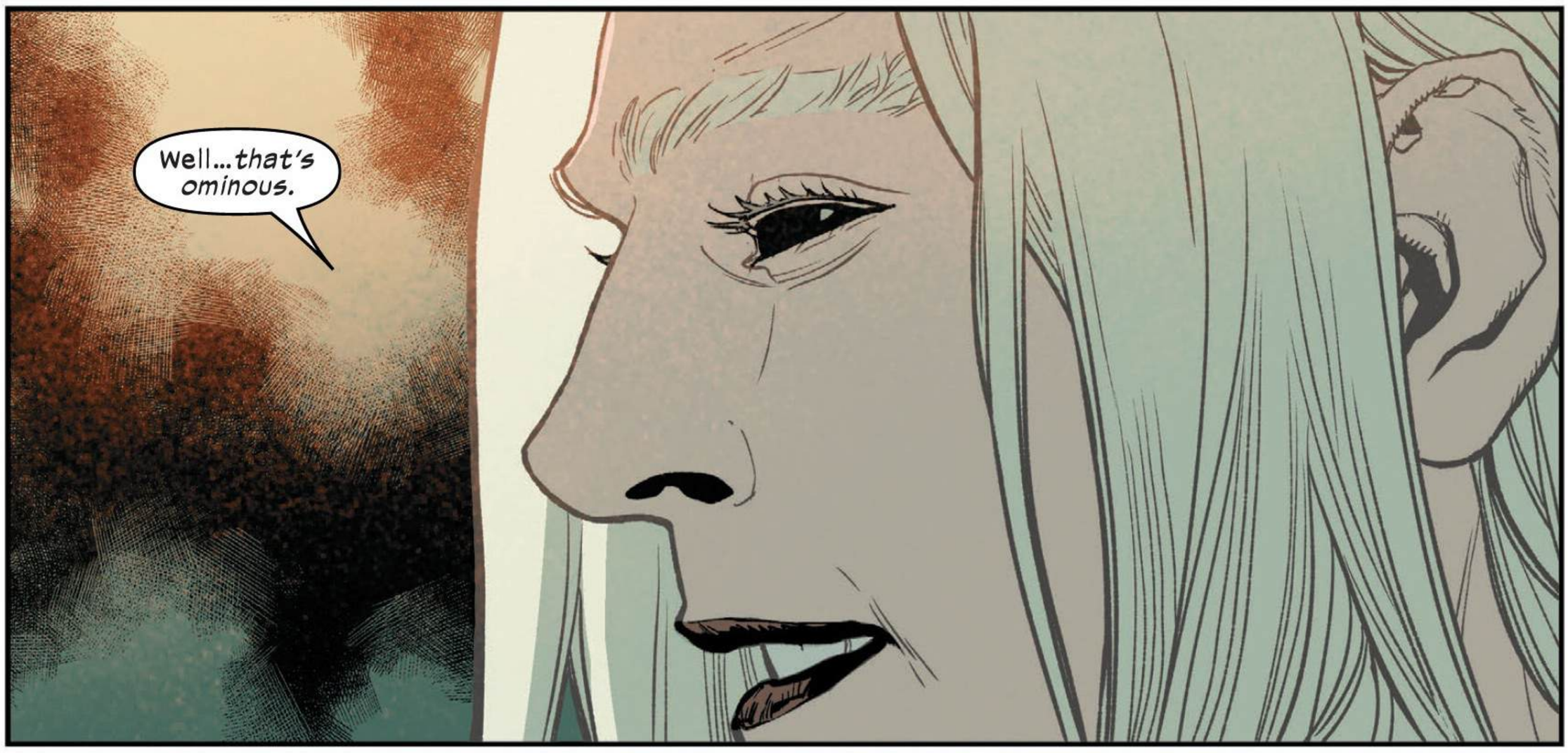
...Then place your piece anywhere on the board. As with life, where you begin has little to do with where you will end.

All the moves are yours and they can take you wherever you choose--*or more importantly*--where fate demands.

TINK!

What the--




Well...that's ominous.

[kra_[0.10]
[koa_[0.10]

[kra_[0.X]
[koa_[0.X]

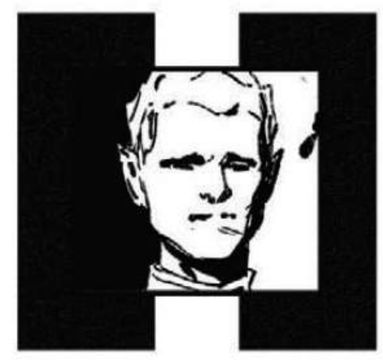
# EMPYRE

The Kree and Skrull Empires have united under Emperor Hulkling to fight a common enemy: the Celestial Messiah, Quoi, and his plant-like Cotati, who have claimed Earth's Moon as their own!

The X-MEN began to fight back on the moon, but in doing so drew the attention of the Cotati to a much bigger target: Earth...and Krakoa.

Rockslide

Loa



Anole

Summoner

Exodus

Magneto

Magik

Magma

Iceman

[kra_[0.11]...]
[koa_[0.11]...]

[A._New_World]

# A REPORT TO THE QUIET COUNCIL FROM THE CAPTAIN COMMANDER

## RE: ASYMMETRICAL WARFARE

For the eyes of the council only.

This a brief overview of our recent captains' quorum, but what should be of particular interest to you are our recommendations regarding enhanced techniques in combat scenarios for mutants with combat experience.

These proposals come with zero reservations and have the full support of the quorum. Research and expansion in this area has our highest recommendation.

## QUORUM NOTES

### Island readiness:

Following the multiple recent incursions of Krakoan space, the quorum's position is that our existing dome of protected space should be expanded through a series of encircling chain islands. We can construct these ourselves and moor them to Krakoa at selected intervals, but we first want to check with Cypher to see if the island can -- and is willing to -- do this itself.

—

### Mutant training:

We know that we're trying to create an atmosphere that is serene and non-militaristic, but Bishop has been cataloging the amount of actual training being done on Danger island in the Atlantic archipelago, and the numbers are much lower than expected. The Krakoan population is clocking in at less than two percent.

We are not suggesting that everyone be required to become proficient at hand-to-hand combat and using their powers in an aggressive fashion, but the consensus here is that we could do a little more.

—

### Archipelago access:

Following the suggestion of the council, we created an escape plan based on tiered evacuations and have had the island telepaths request to and seed this information into the minds of all Krakoans. We consulted with Monet regarding extra-island X-Corp employee procedures, and she also recommended packaging this into the language dump for any new mutants arriving to the island and into all resurrection protocols.

[redacted]

**Omega Level mutants:**

[redacted] See below regarding enchanted techniques. [redacted]

—

**Enhanced combat techniques:**

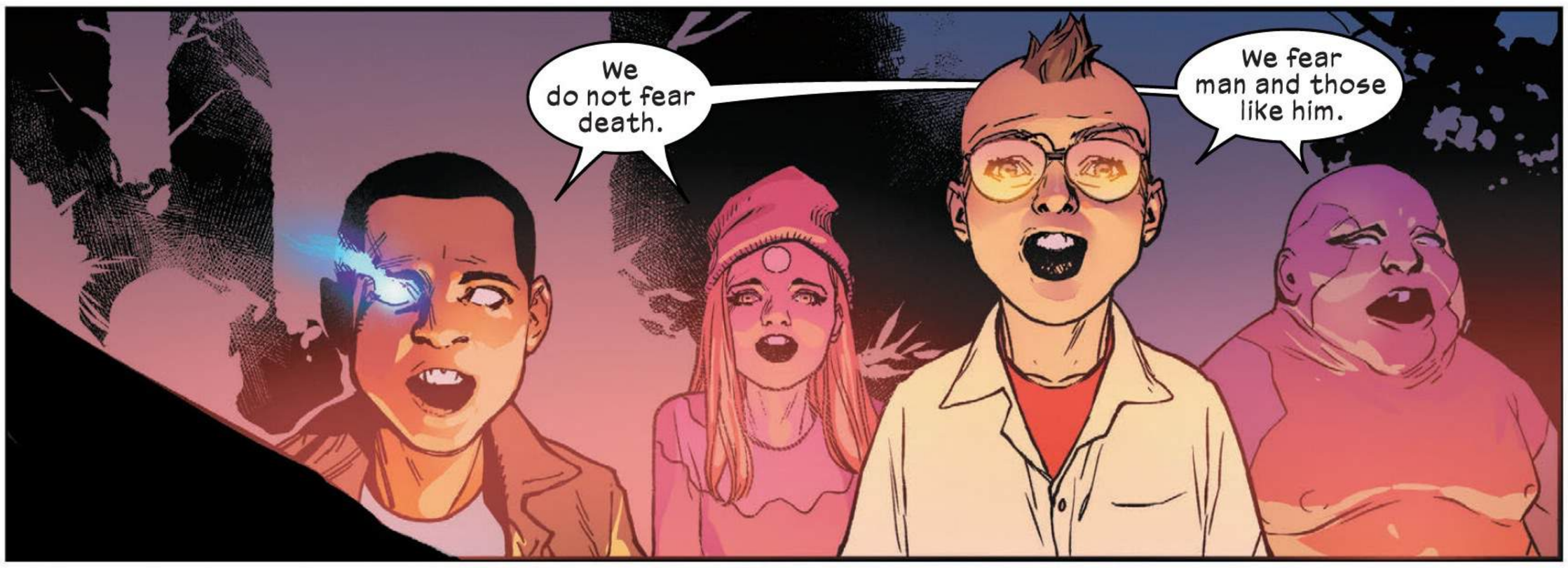
The quorum had a prolonged and rather interesting conversation about the Five and possibilities of conjoined power sets in both offensive and defensive situations.

We workshopped a single mutant's powers [using Magneto as our point of reference*] and how that mutant's power could integrate with others and -- limiting ourselves to three or fewer complementary mutants -- we came up with roughly 40 useful combinations in military scenarios [28 offensive, 12 defensive]. This, we all agree, is worth further study, and I've created a list of necessary resources to move forward. Additionally, Bishop has volunteered to preside over our first mutant war college.

As stated above, this plan has our highest recommendation.

**I've also attached the Magneto combinations to this file for the council to review.*

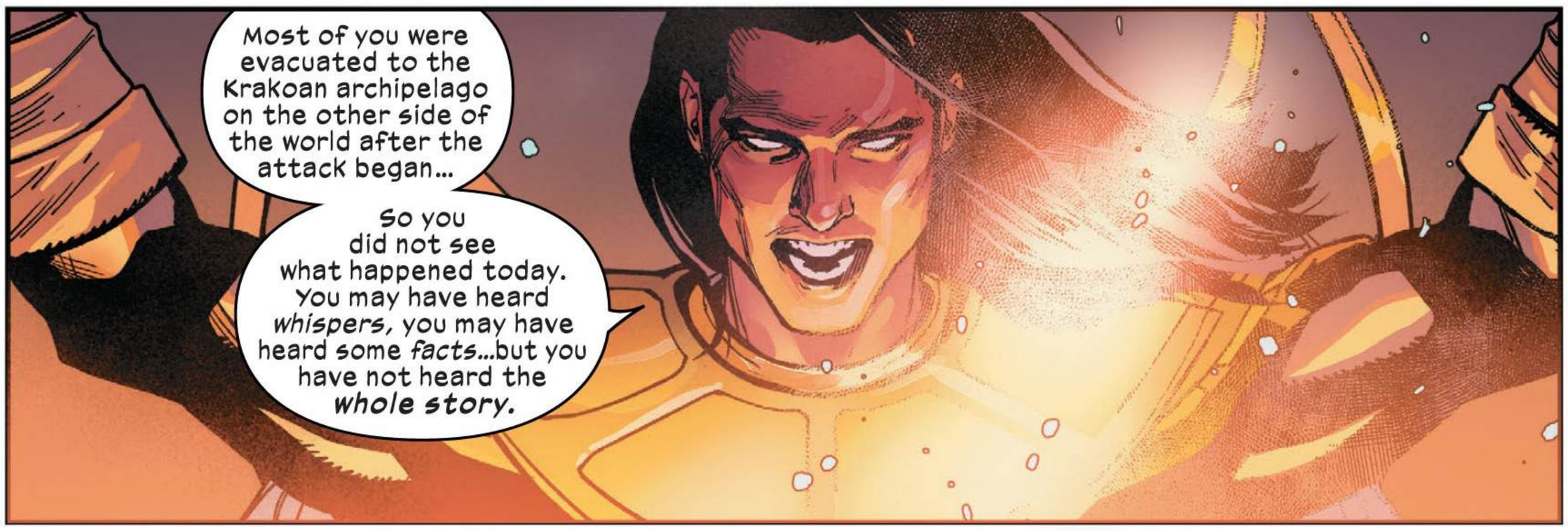
Krakoa.
The next day.
Are you afraid?
I ask because it's important that we never lie to one another. It takes courage to speak the truth--*it takes courage to hear it.*
Today, mutants died. So I ask...*are you afraid?*
I don't know about everyone else, but I'm not.
*And why is that?*
Because they're coming back.
Yes. The Five are hard at work...and tomorrow we see our family again--*for some* it will be as if it *never happened.*
But it did happen. And that's what you need to remember about days like today.
We can erase the ***effect*** but not the ***cause.***
So are you afraid?


We do not fear death.
We fear man and those like him.

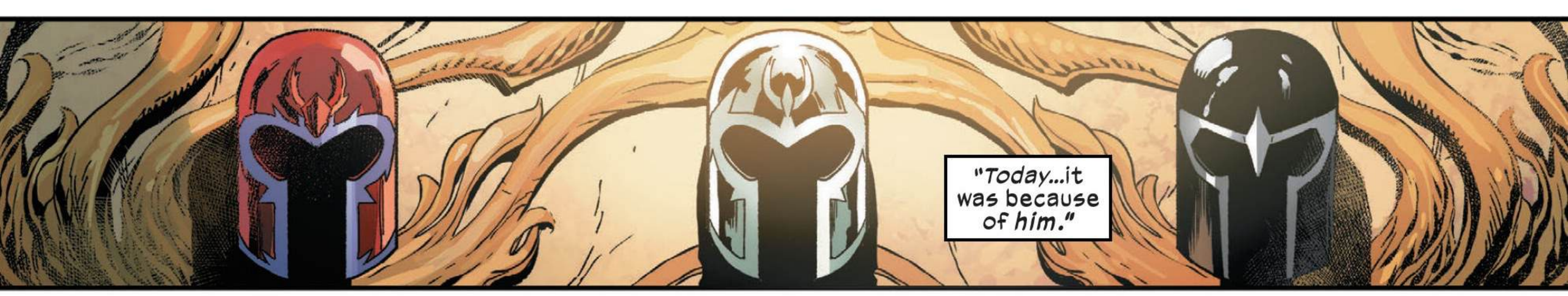
Just look at the world they have made.

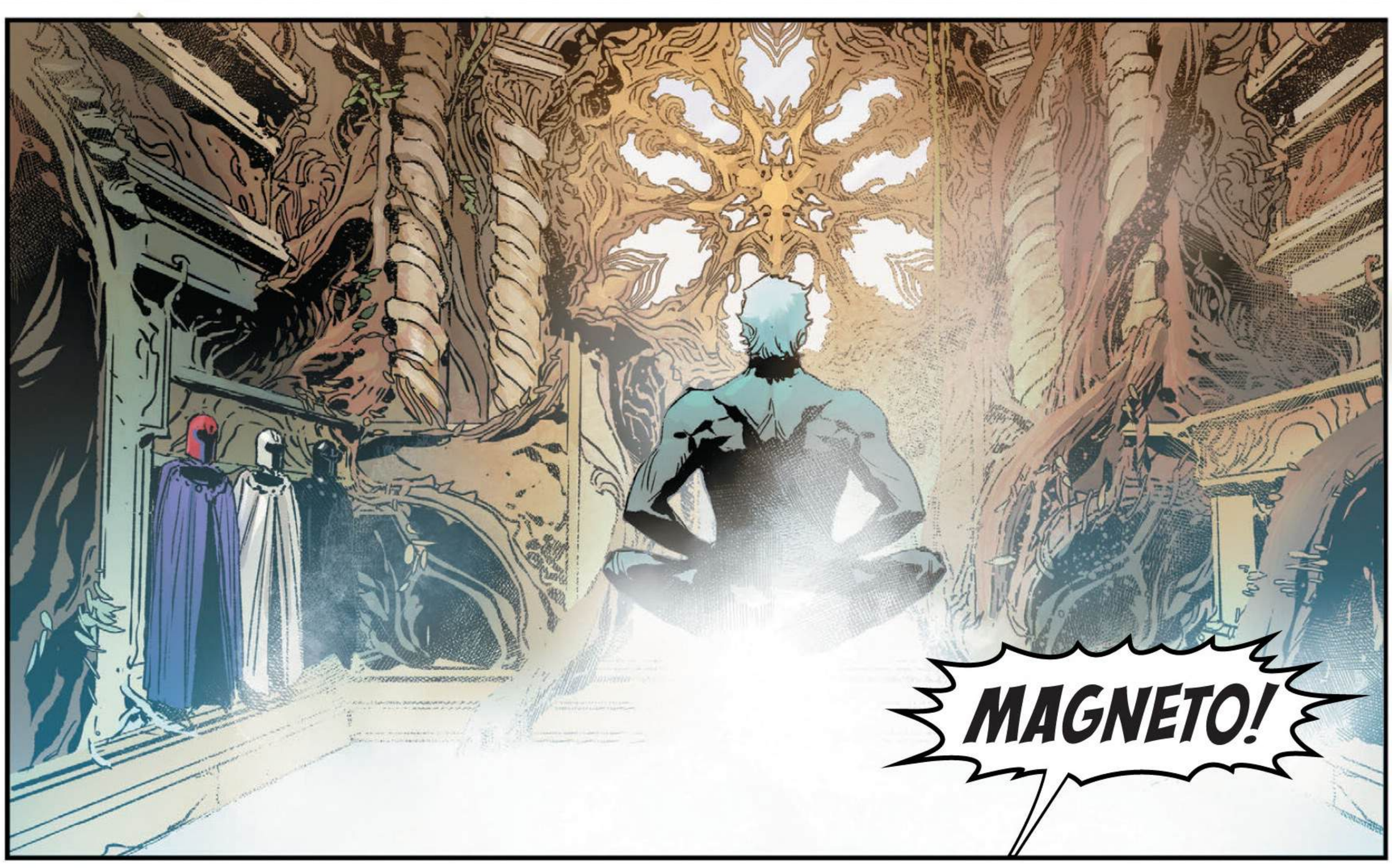
Exodus...
Why don't we stop them?
You cannot stop someone from being what they are.
We could destroy them--*erase them*--but then we would be as they are.

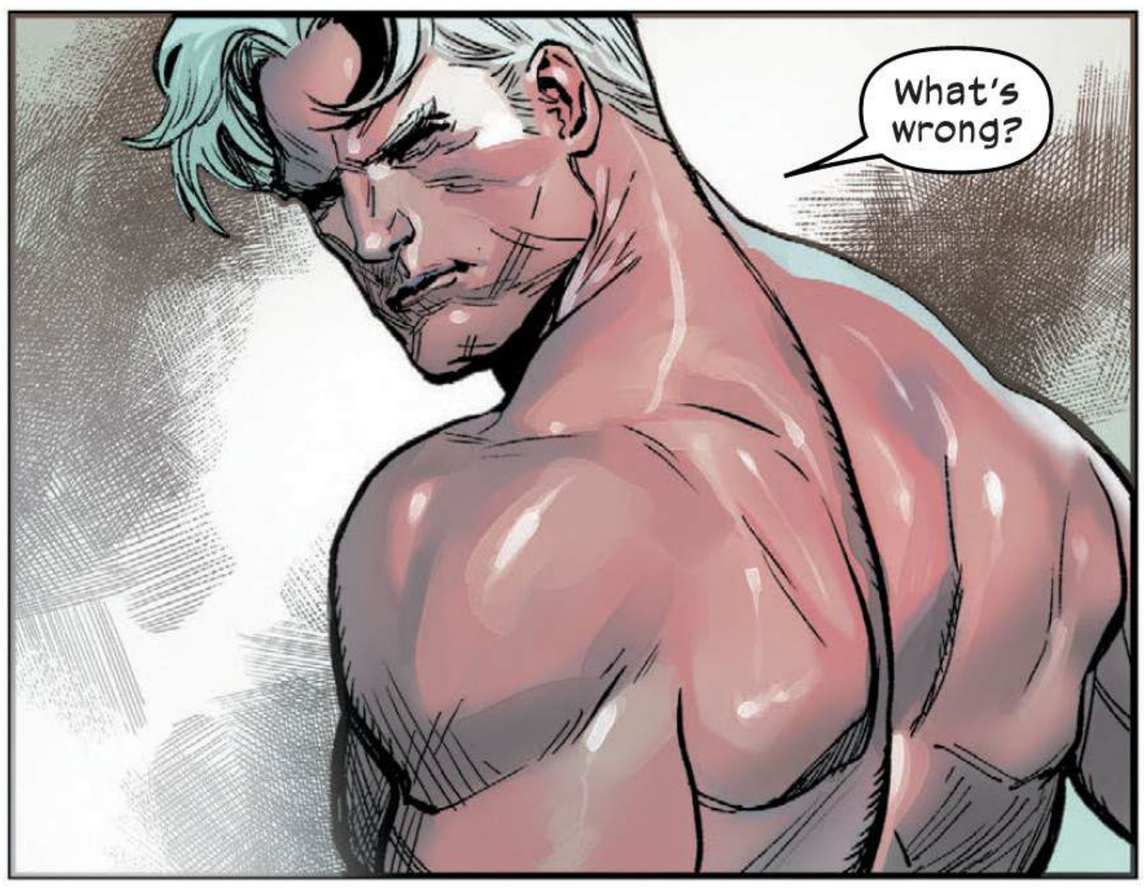
Then what can we do?
You--*all of you*--will grow and play and live and love as you should.
Leave progress to us. You are in... *good hands.*

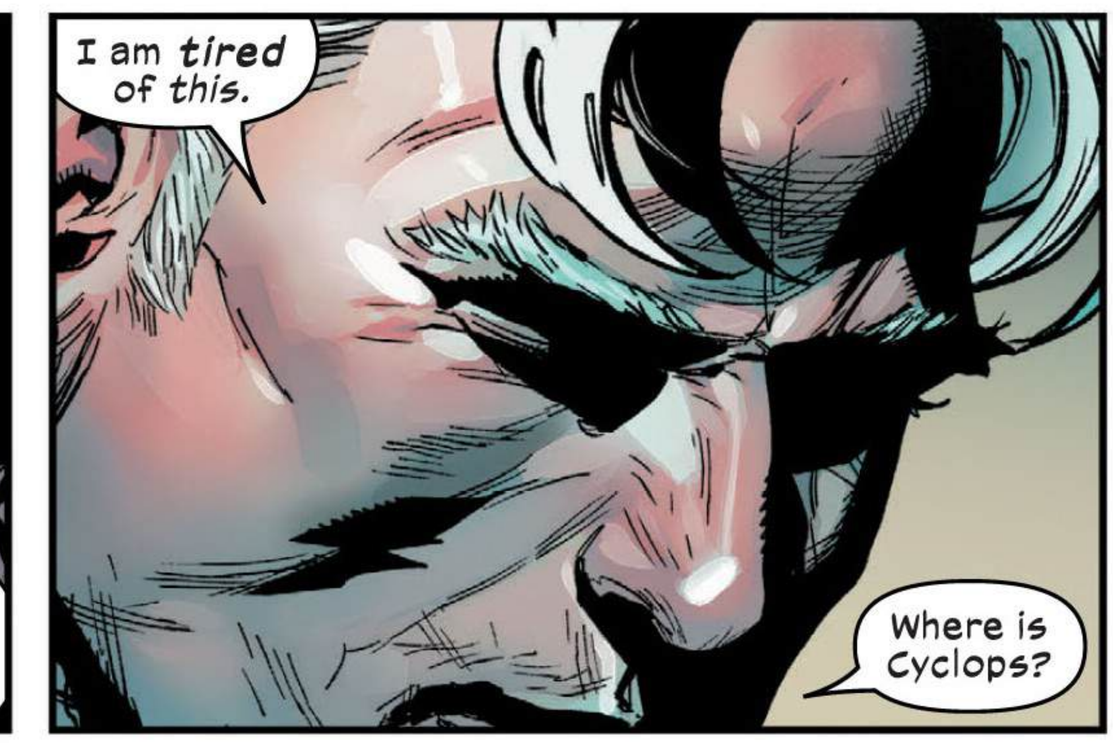

Most of you were evacuated to the Krakoan archipelago on the other side of the world after the attack began...
So you did not see what happened today. You may have heard *whispers,* you may have heard some *facts*...but you have not heard the ***whole story.***

"And that is why you are here now...to hear the story--*to hear the truth*--of why you do not have to be afraid.


"*Today*...it was because of *him*."


MAGNETO!



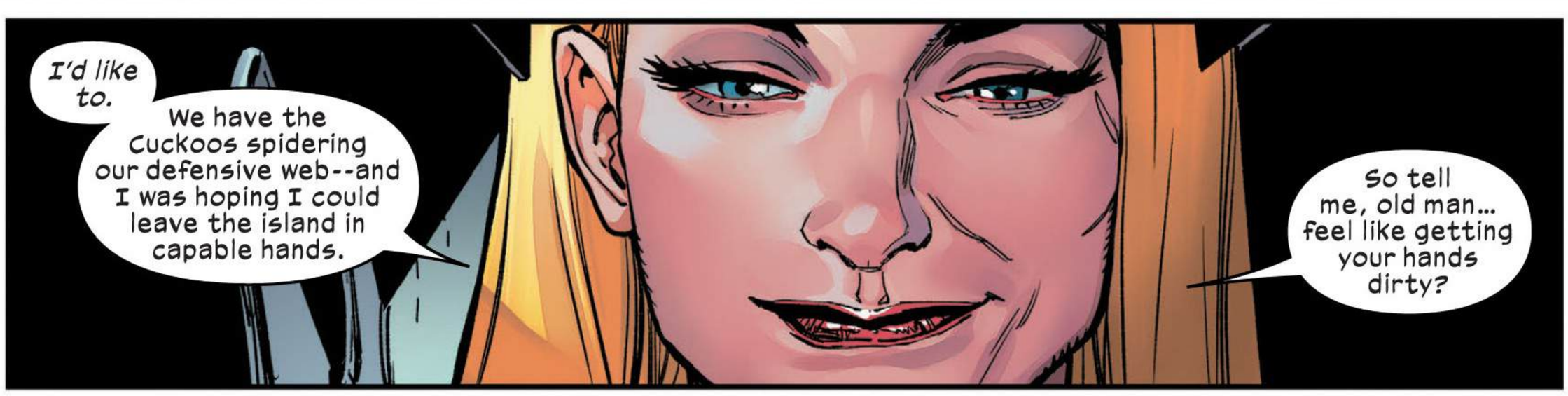



This attack actually originated from the Moon--they're using it as a staging area of some sort--he's on it now, but it's the front line. ***Where he should be.***

So alien? ***Not human?***

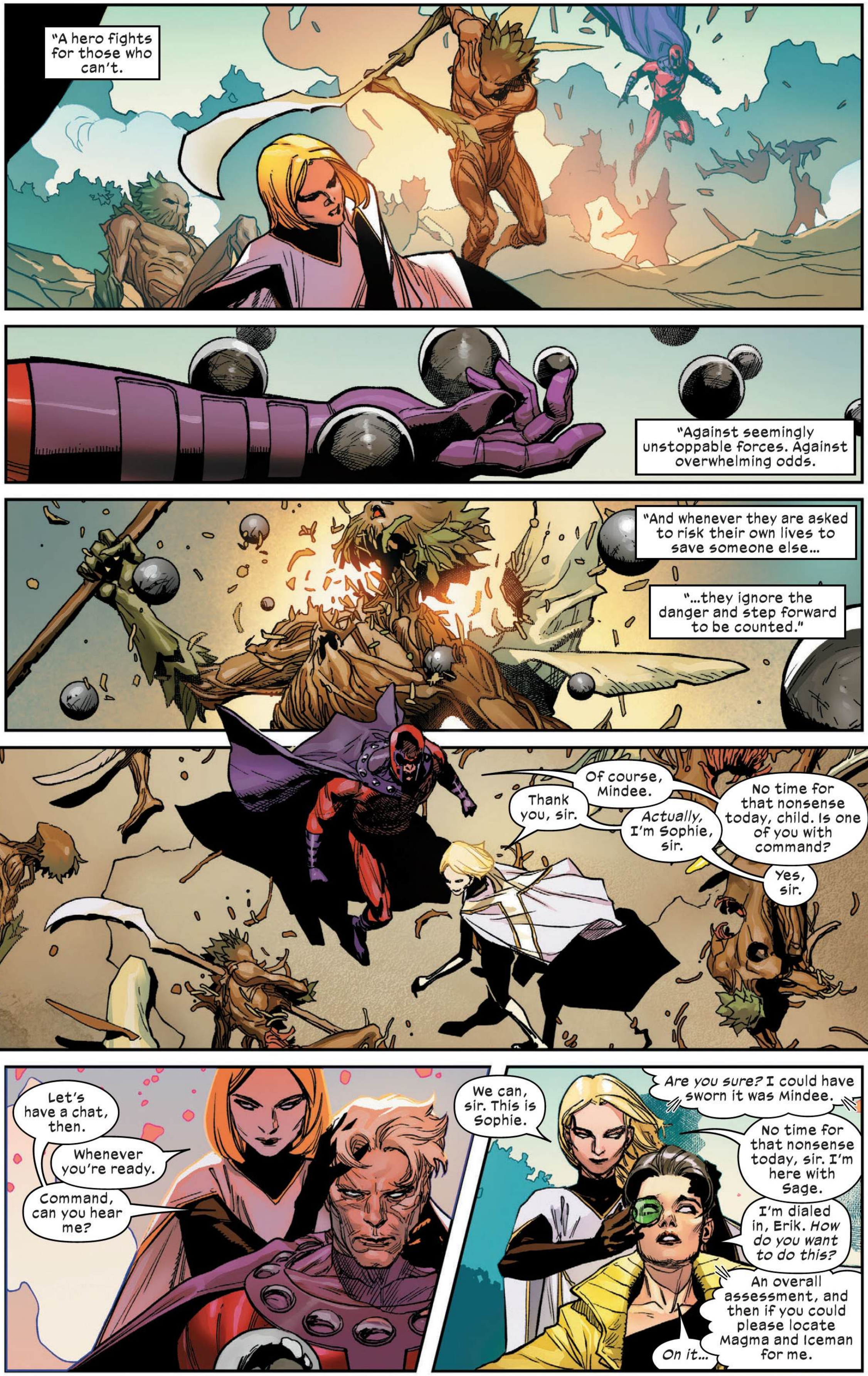
Yeah. That's right.

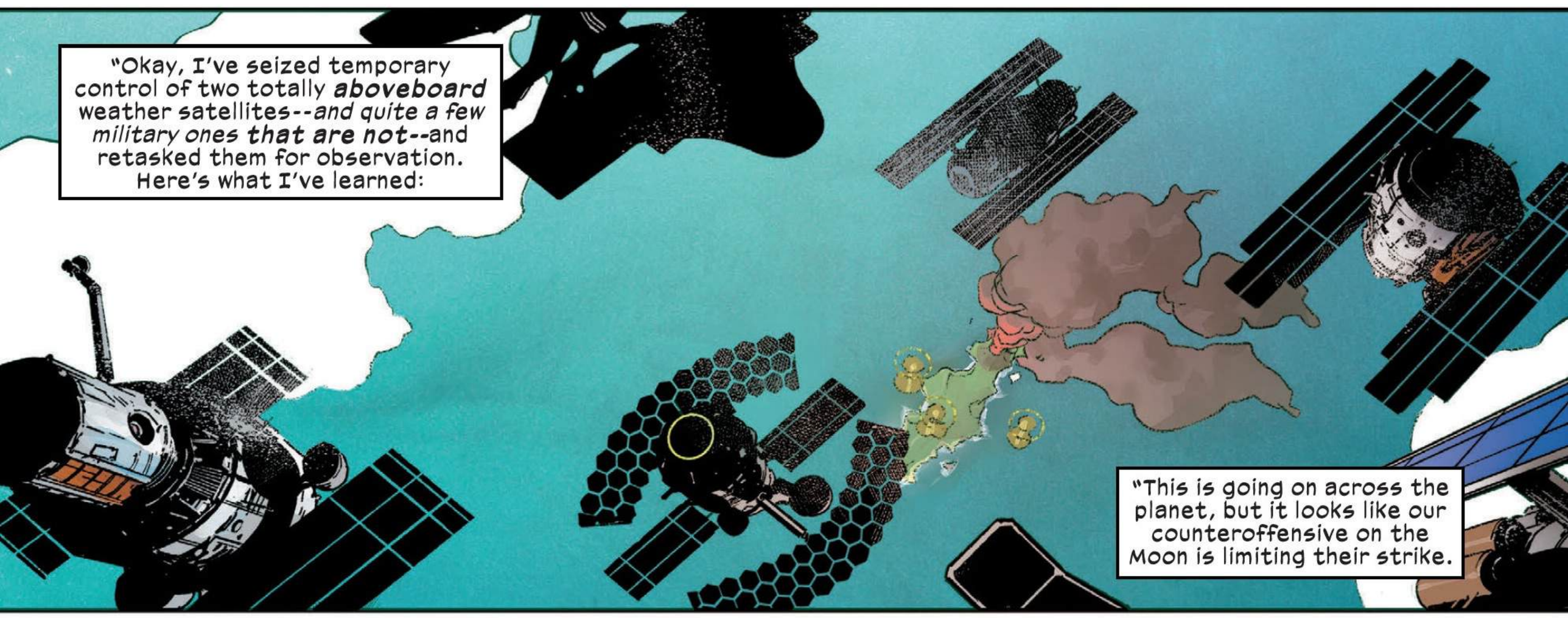
Are you and the other captains headed to join him there?



"Do you know what a hero is, children?

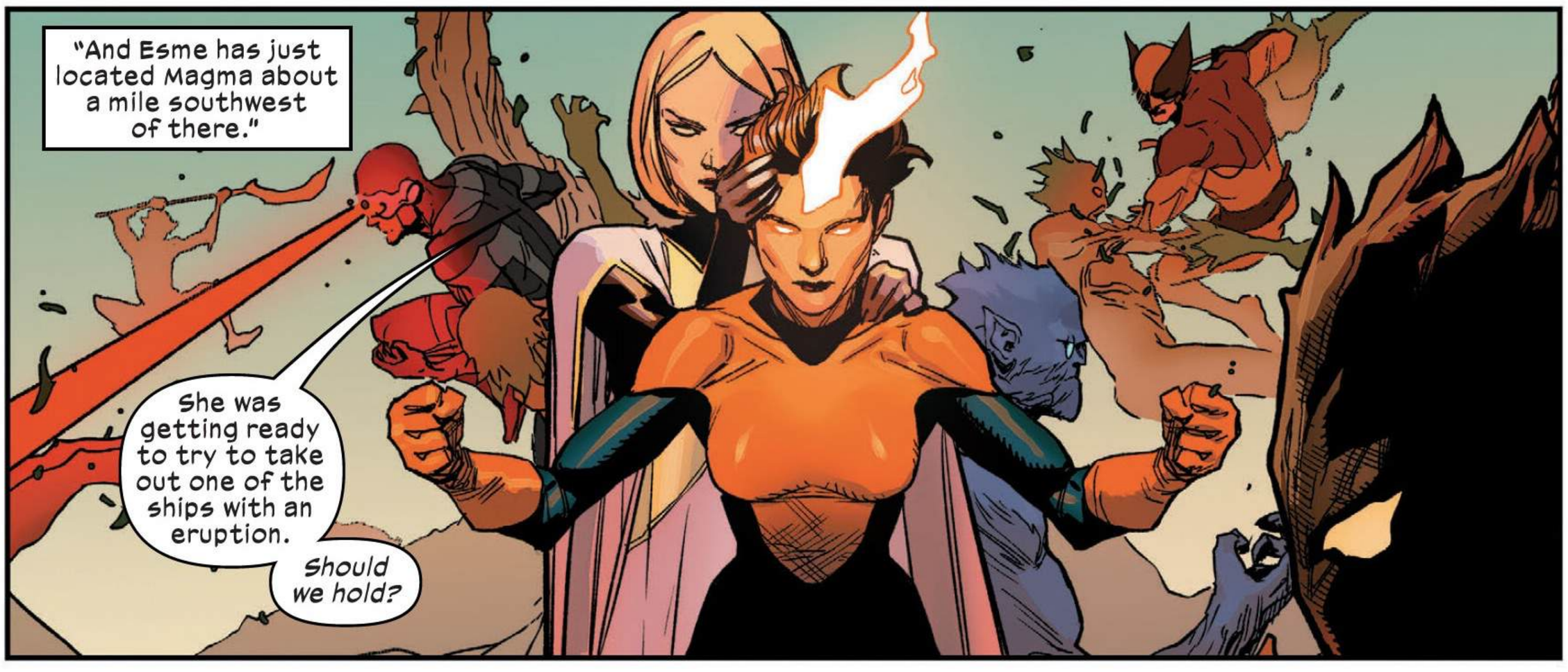
"Let me tell you.


"A hero fights for those who can't.
"Against seemingly unstoppable forces. Against overwhelming odds.
"And whenever they are asked to risk their own lives to save someone else...
"...they ignore the danger and step forward to be counted."
Thank you, sir.
Of course, Mindee.
Actually, I'm Sophie, sir.
No time for that nonsense today, child. Is one of you with command?
Yes, sir.
Let's have a chat, then.
Whenever you're ready.
Command, can you hear me?
We can, sir. This is Sophie.
Are you sure? I could have sworn it was Mindee.
No time for that nonsense today, sir. I'm here with Sage.
I'm dialed in, Erik. How do you want to do this?
An overall assessment, and then if you could please locate Magma and Iceman for me.
On it...


"Okay, I've seized temporary control of two totally **aboveboard** weather satellites--*and quite a few military ones* **that are not**--and retasked them for observation. Here's what I've learned:
"This is going on across the planet, but it looks like our counteroffensive on the Moon is limiting their strike.

"Black Tom is holding his own with our island-wide defenses.
"And we've begun to push back.

"Iceman is helping Storm to the north.


"And Esme has just located Magma about a mile southwest of there."
She was getting ready to try to take out one of the ships with an eruption.
*Should we hold?*

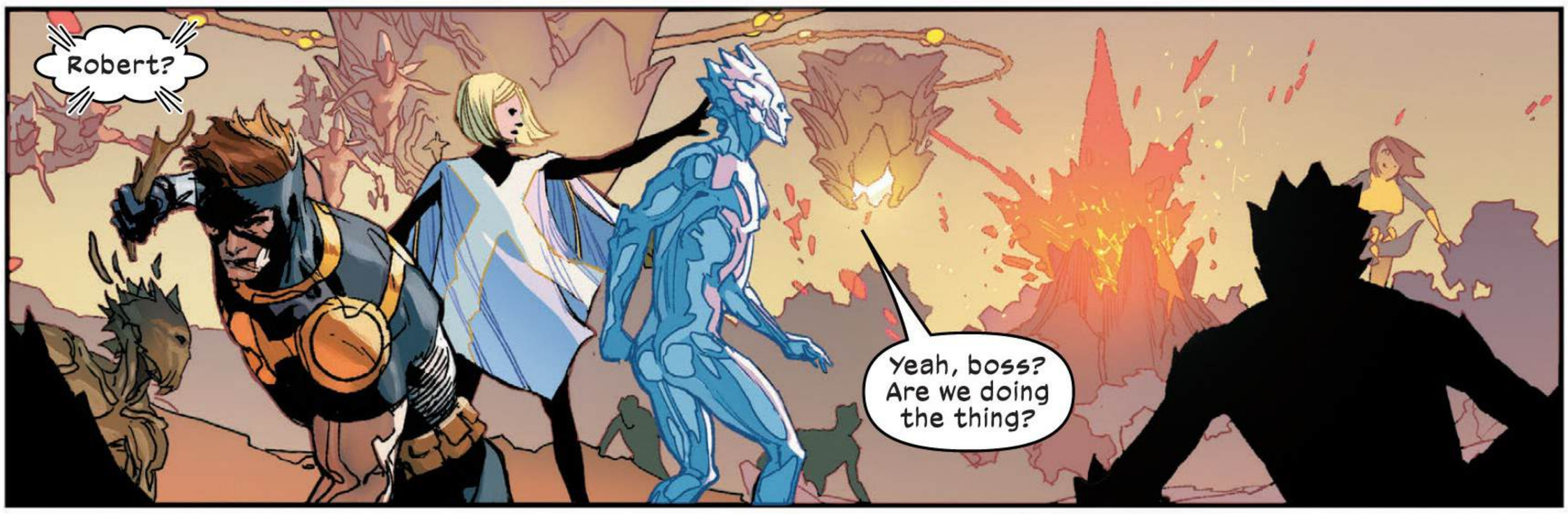
Amara, we know that any Krakoan eruption is self-generated, so I asked you a month ago about finding a deep enough remote vein to tap into in case of an emergency.
You wouldn't happen to have done that, would you?

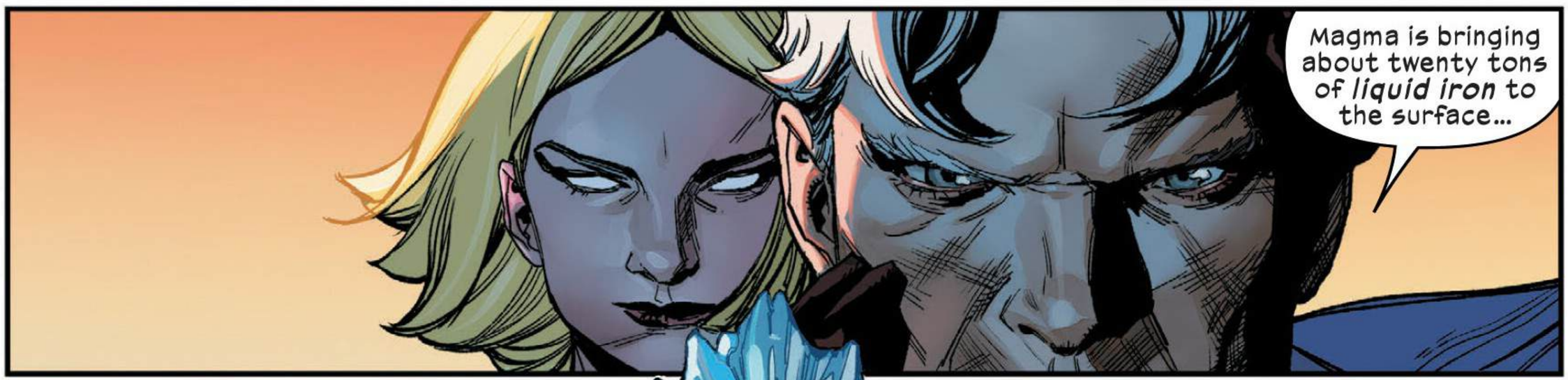
Yes. I did. There's a dormant volcano about twelve miles from here that's deep enough.
*You want me to blow it?*

I do. But if you don't mind, let's not get too *carried away.*
I'd like to avoid an ecological disaster if possible.

I'll do my best, sir, but *no promises.*
I'm ***very excited*** about the possibilities here.

"As am I, child."


Robert?
Yeah, boss? Are we doing the thing?

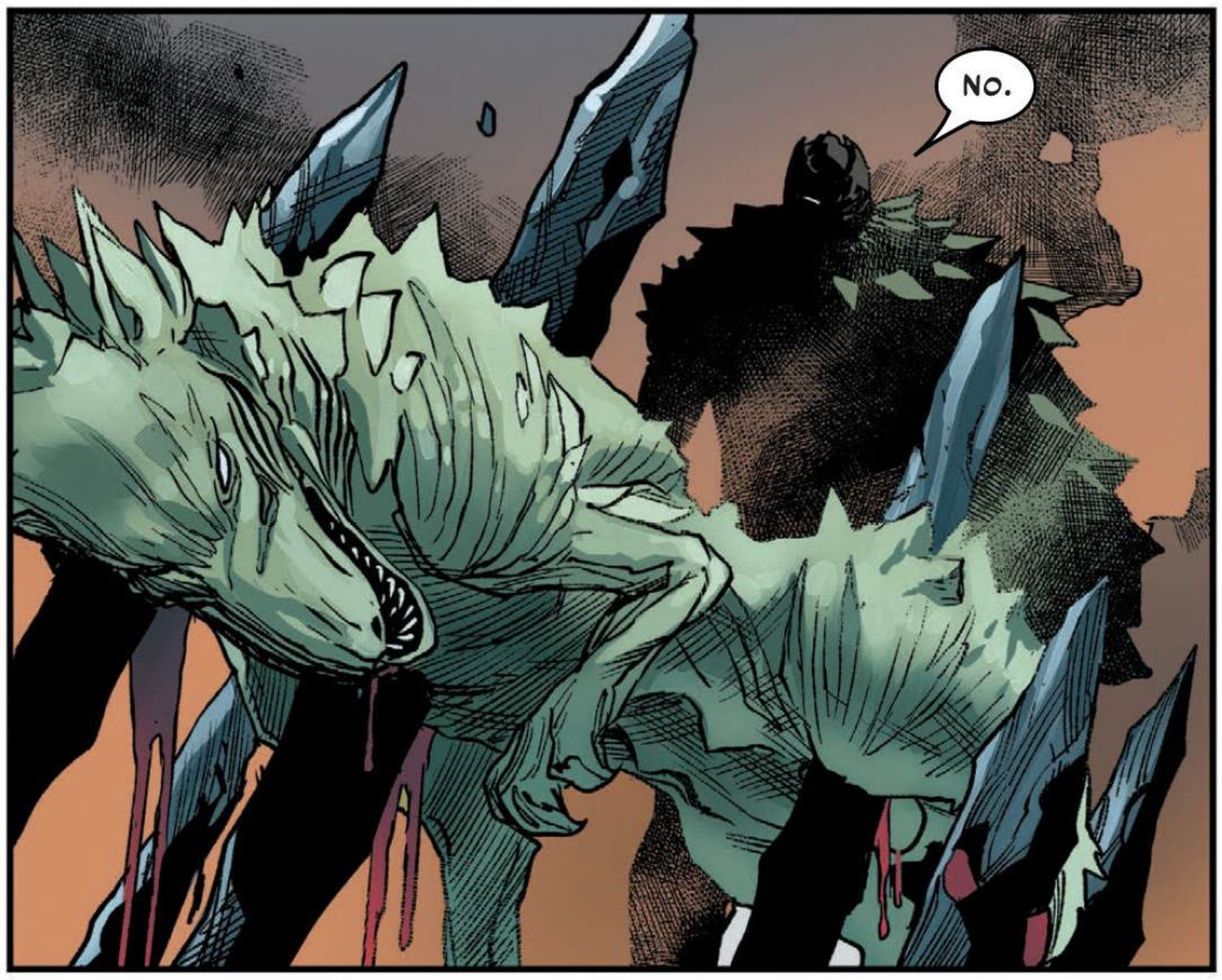

Magma is bringing about twenty tons of *liquid iron* to the surface...

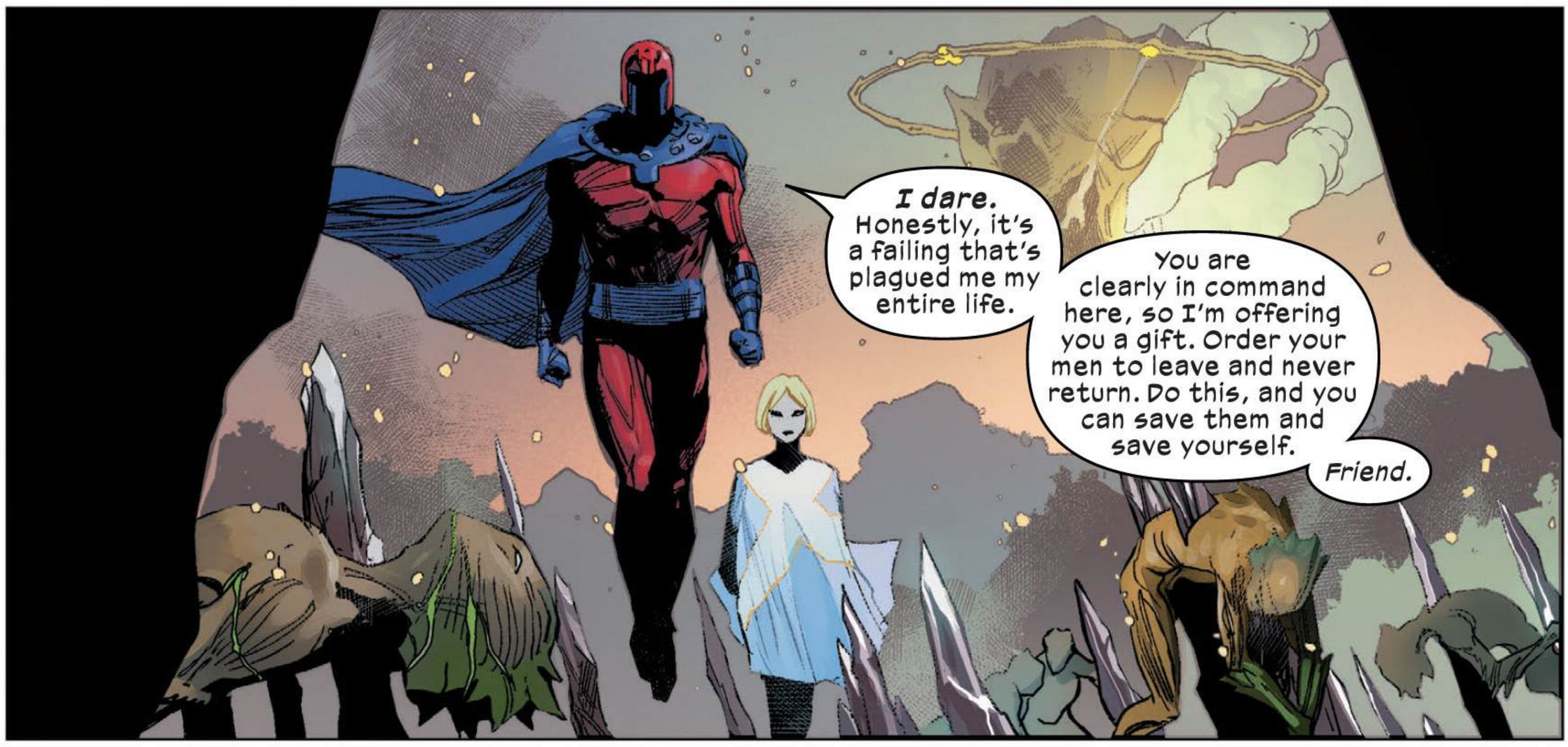
Be a good boy and *cool it down* for me.
*Not a problem.*

"It might be brittle though."

Broken metal with sharp edges...
Whatever will I do with that?

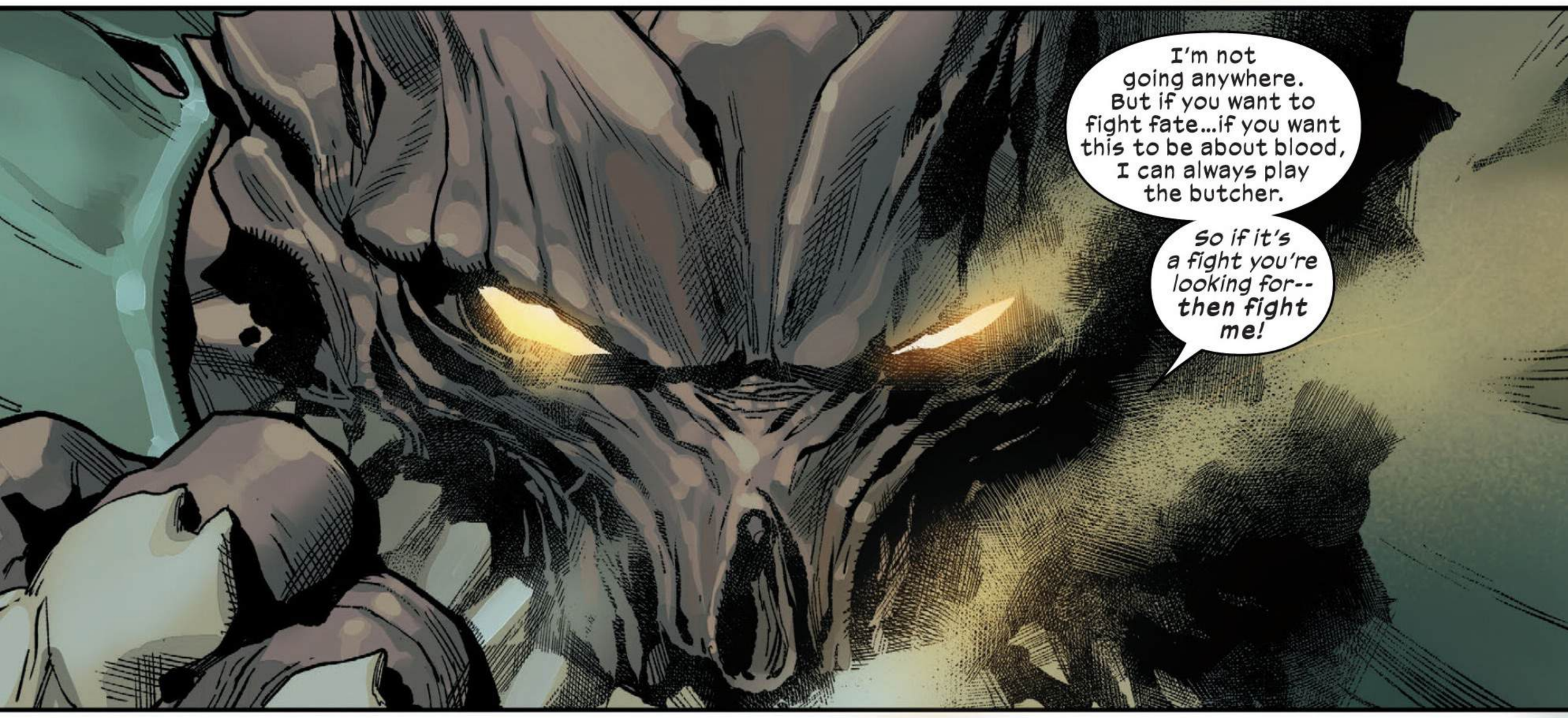
Soft meaty creatures...
...and your cursed metal rain. Tell me who does this... Tell me or--
BHAH!

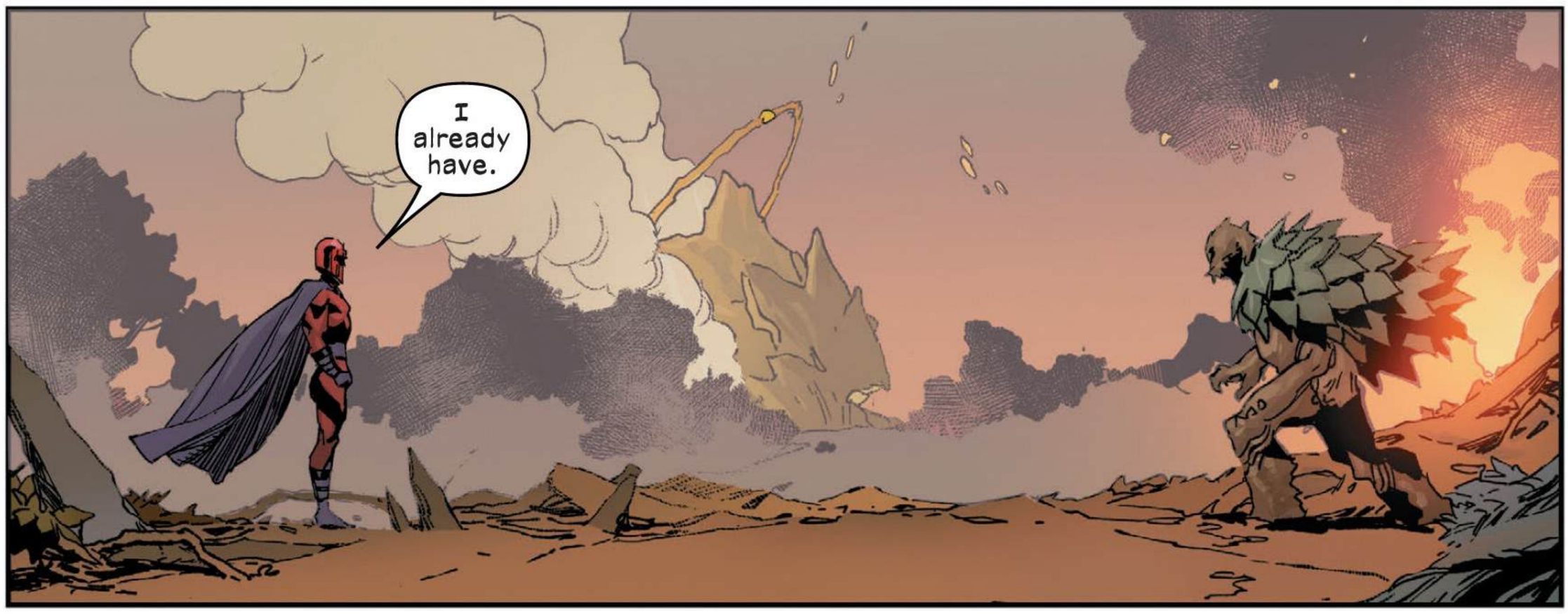


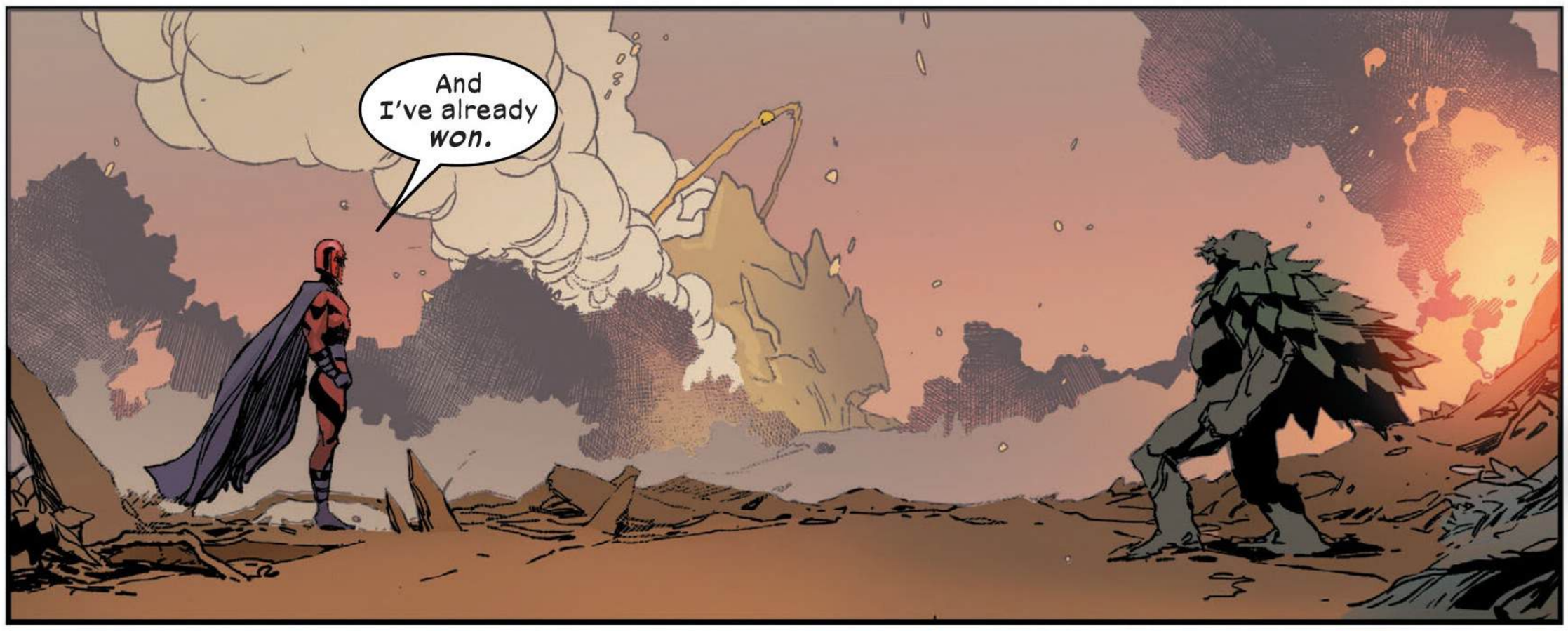

I dare. Honestly, it's a failing that's plagued me my entire life.
You are clearly in command here, so I'm offering you a gift. Order your men to leave and never return. Do this, and you can save them and save yourself.
Friend.

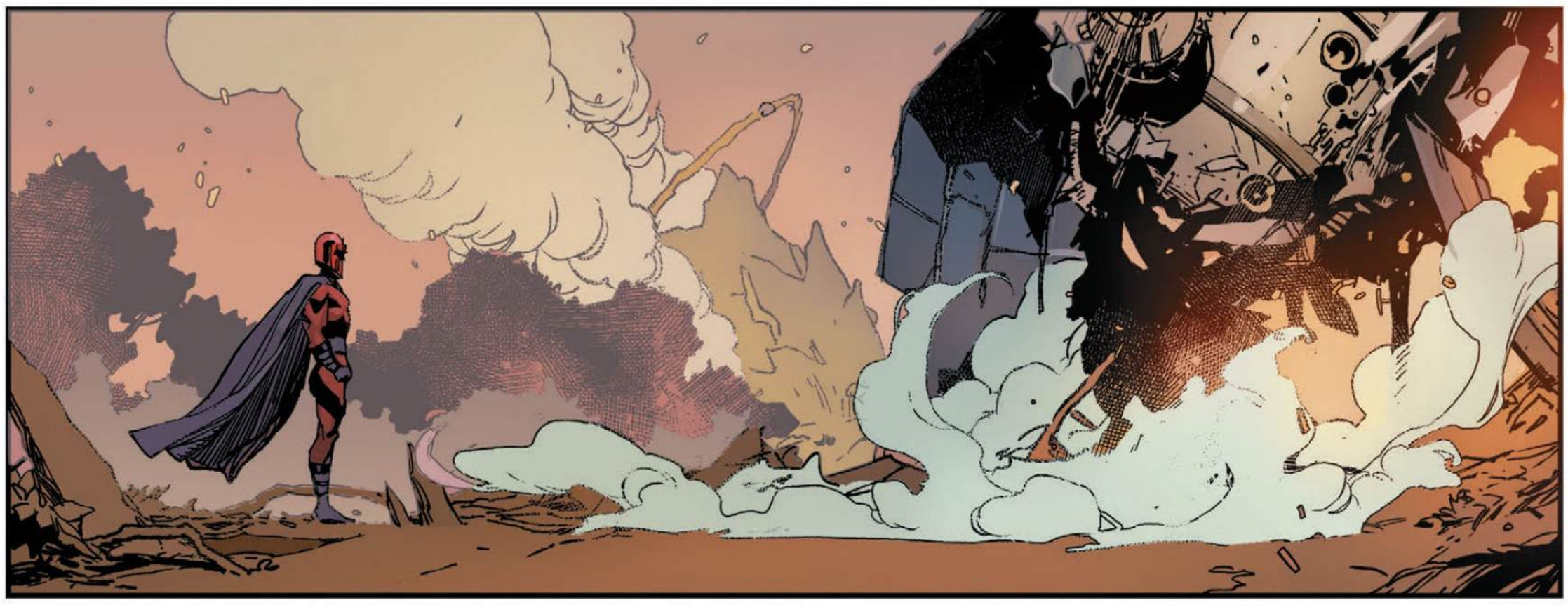
Do you have any idea on how many worlds I had stood facing someone like you?
Some proud meat, thinking your meat thoughts of war and valor.

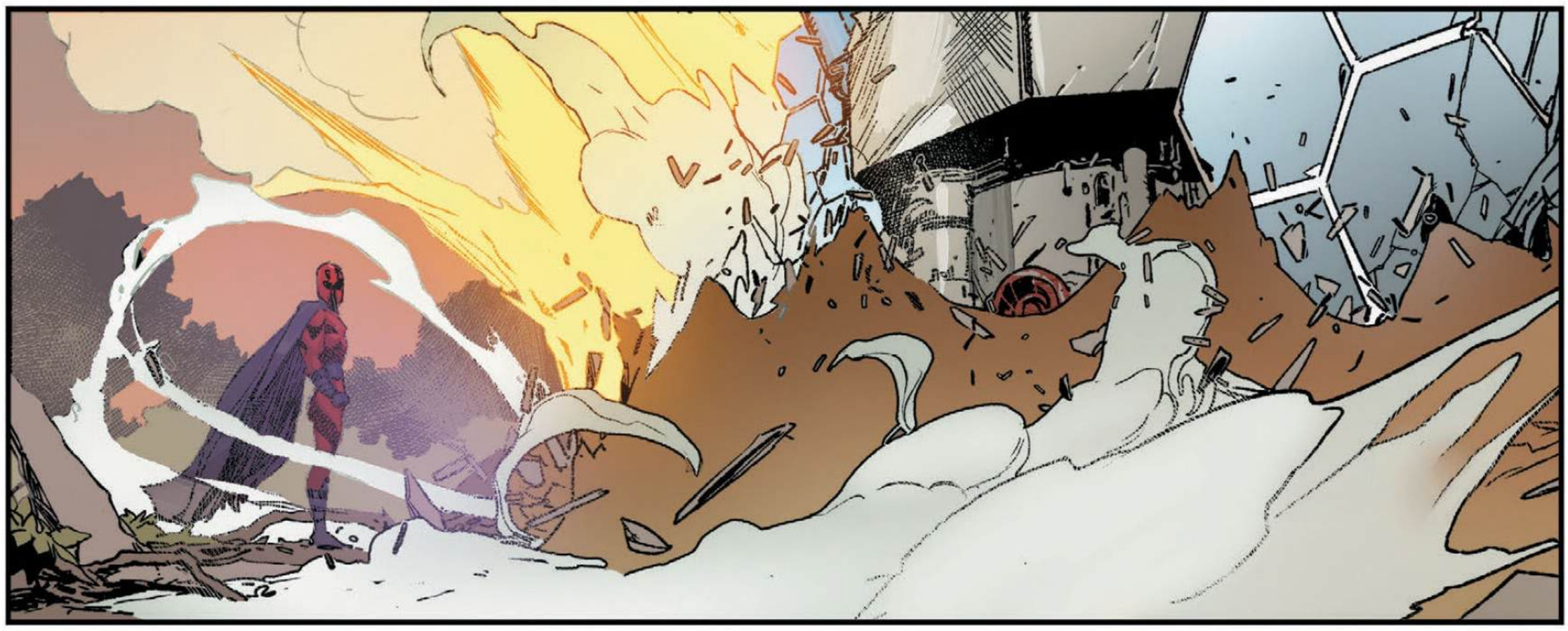
I am the forest. I am the world. I do not lose.
All it takes is one seed and a little time...
A little time and a little meat in the ground. Don't you understand? You're our food.


I'm not going anywhere. But if you want to fight fate...if you want this to be about blood, I can always play the butcher.
So if it's a fight you're looking for-- then fight me!

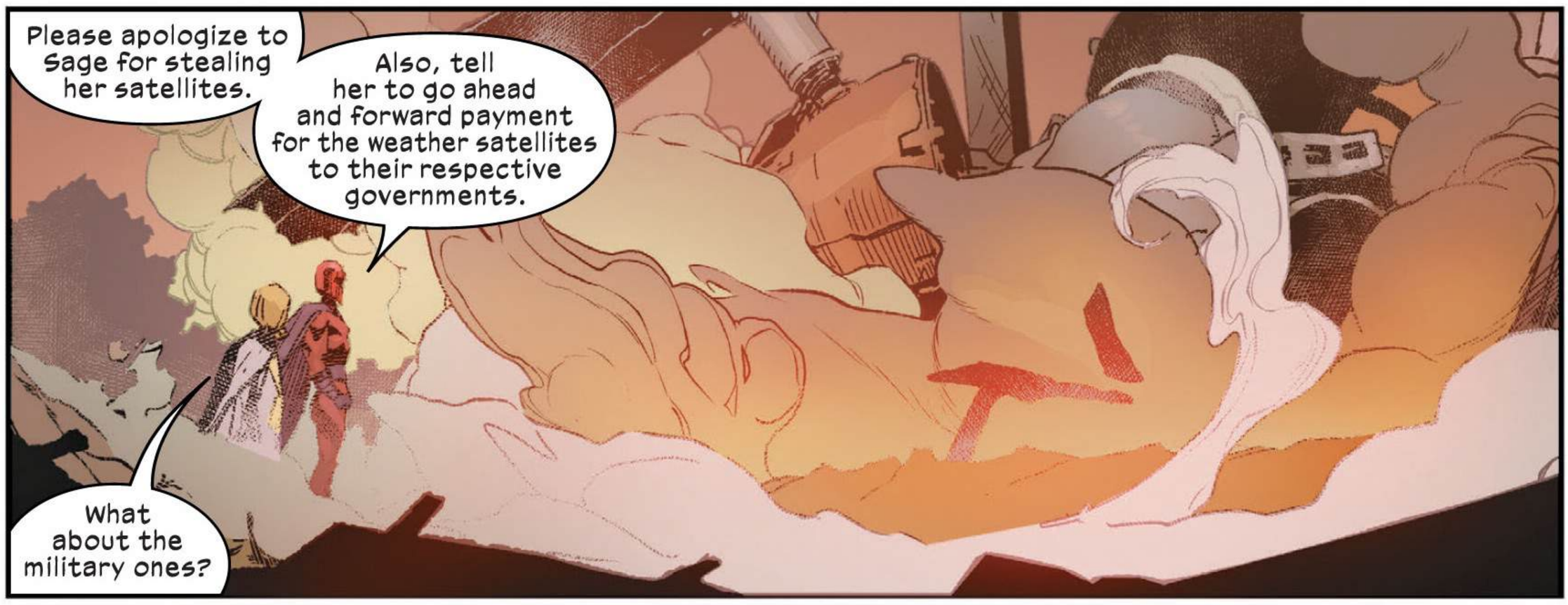

I already have.


And I've already *won.*



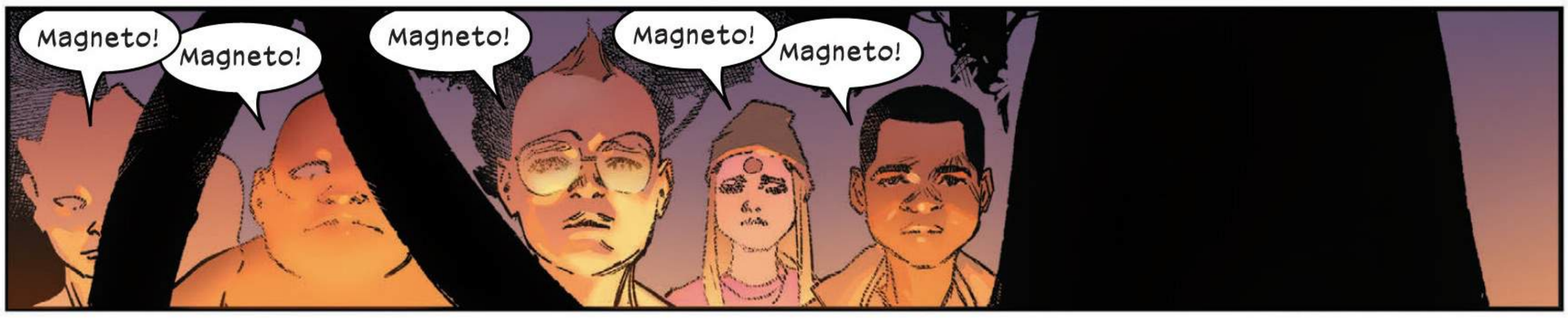


Mindee.
Yes, sir.


Please apologize to Sage for stealing her satellites.
Also, tell her to go ahead and forward payment for the weather satellites to their respective governments.
What about the military ones?

"You mean the ones we're not supposed to know about?"

"Yes. The same ones you dropped on this idiot and used to destroy his ships."



Yes. Magneto.
And he is...
"...mutant."

ROD REIS

[FX01]

Chapter 15

# The World

# 15

[kra_[0.1]
[koa_[0.1]

[kra_[0.X]
[koa_[0.X]

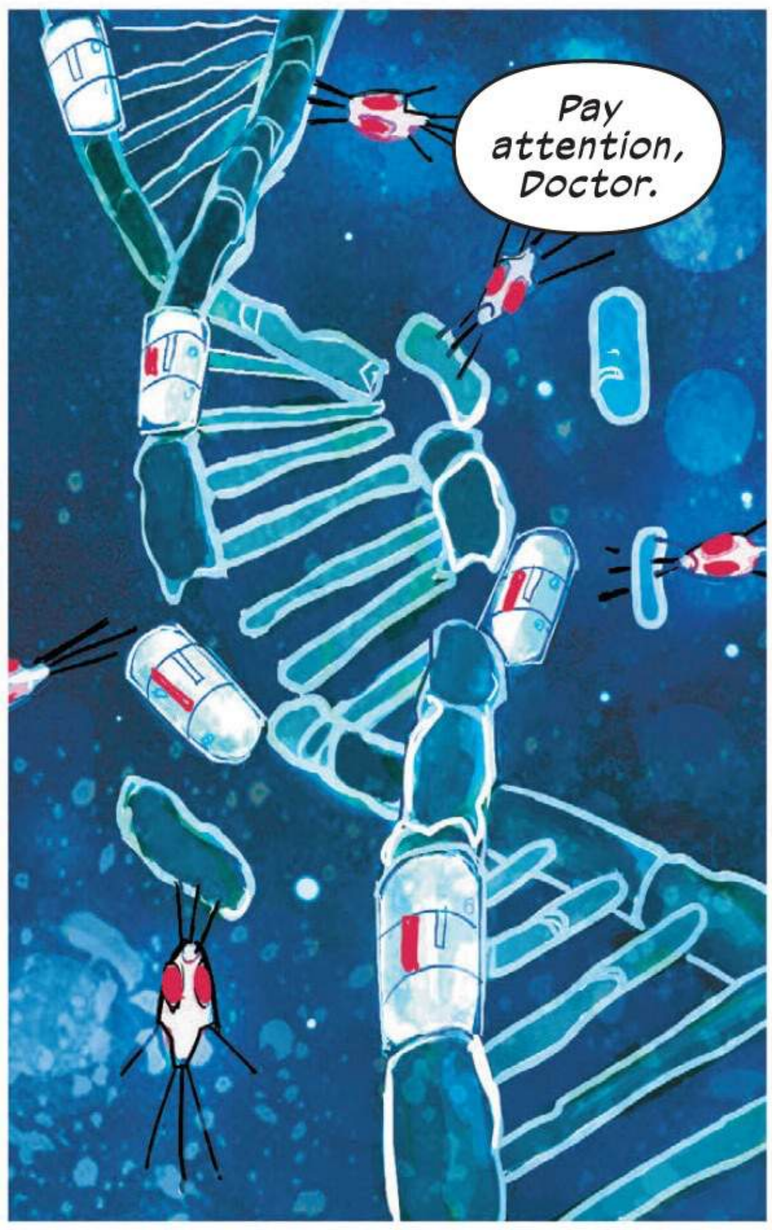
# CHARLIE AND THE BABY FACTORY

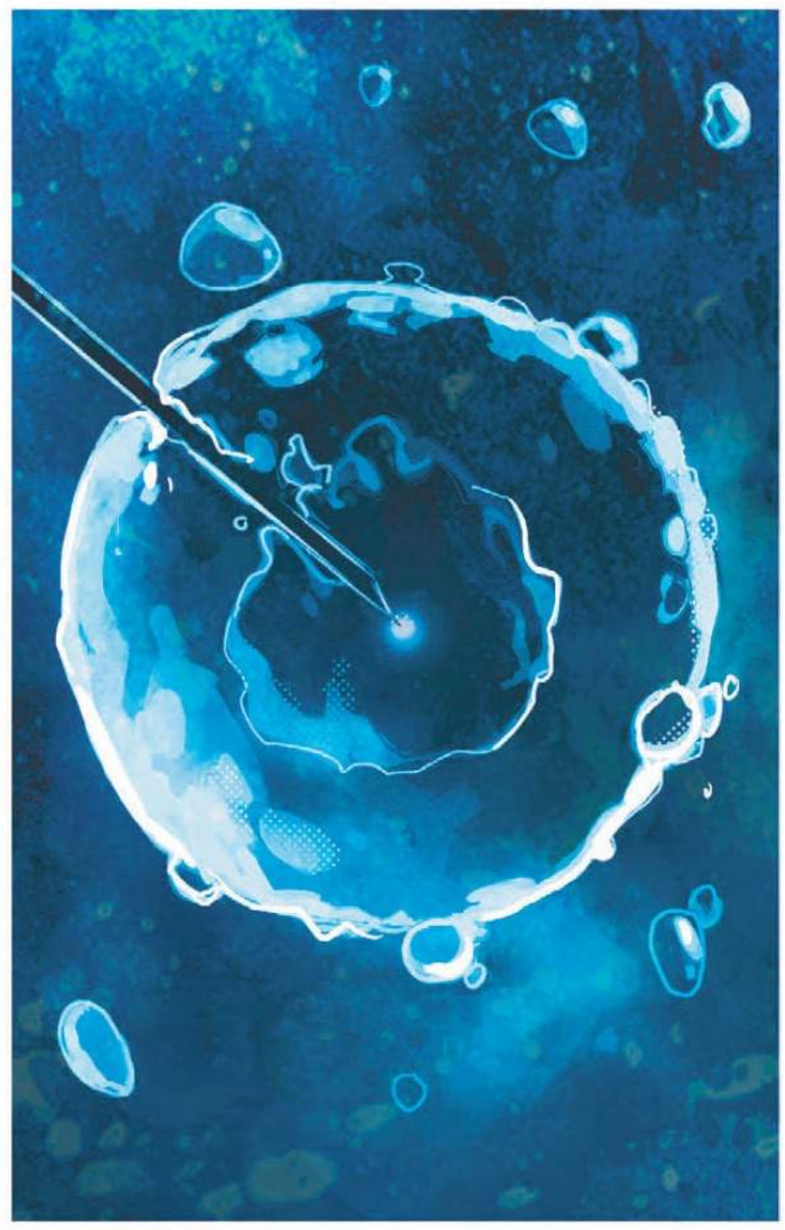
FANTOMEX was created to be a super-soldier against mutantkind and raised in the World, a laboratory whose inhabitants are unmoored from everything outside its walls...including time itself.

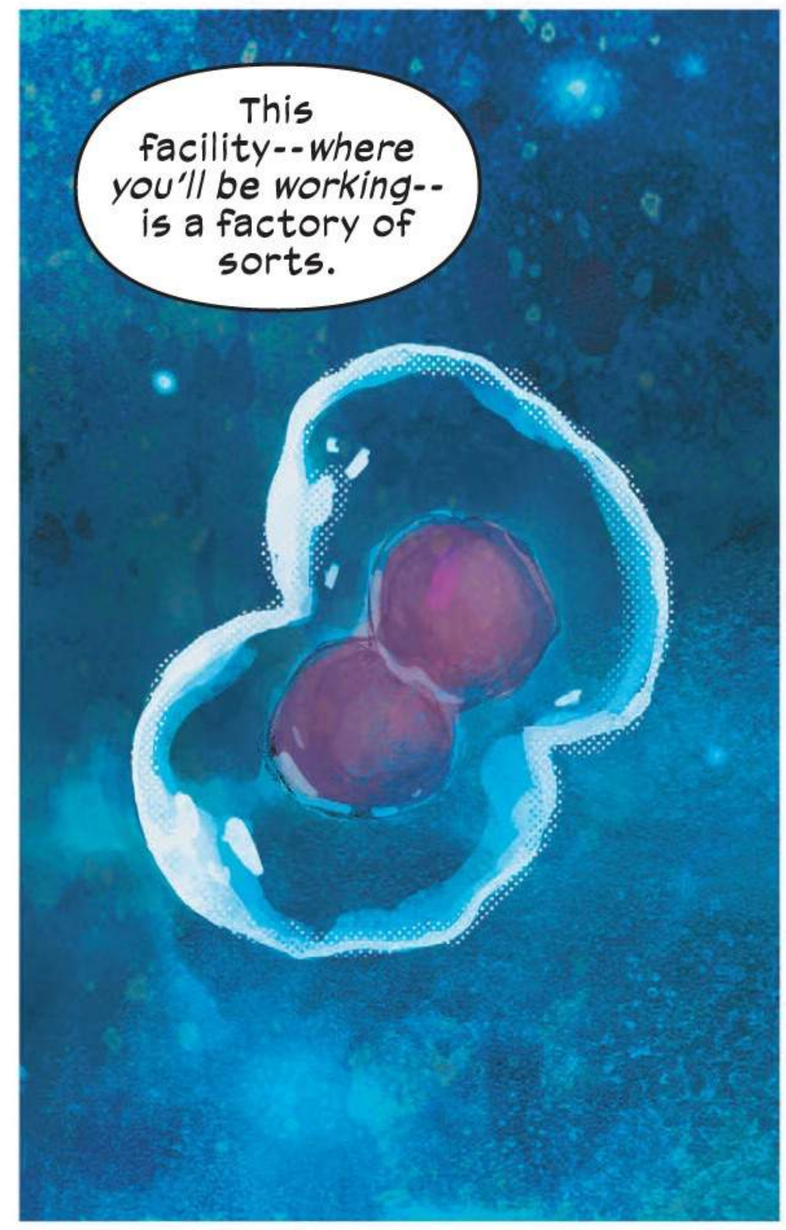
Fantomex

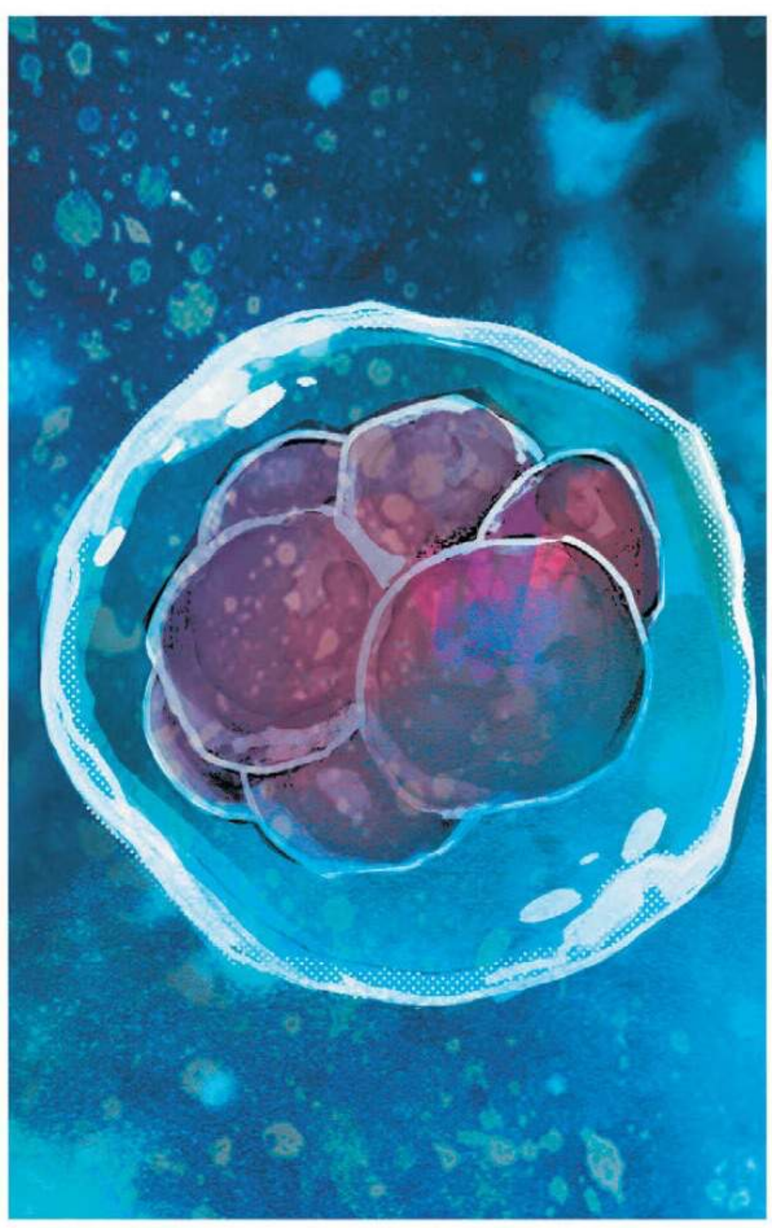
[kra_[0.1]...]
[koa_[0.1]...]

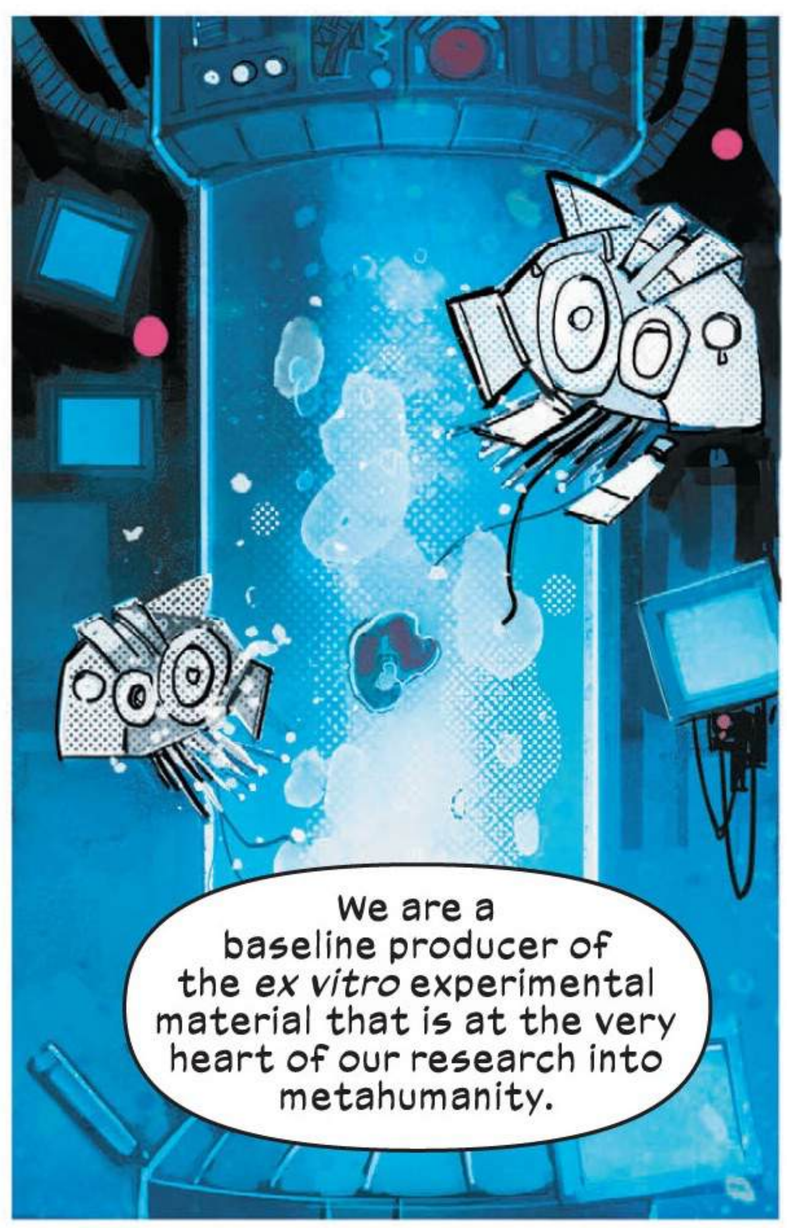
[A._New_World]


Pay attention, Doctor.




This facility--where you'll be working--is a factory of sorts.

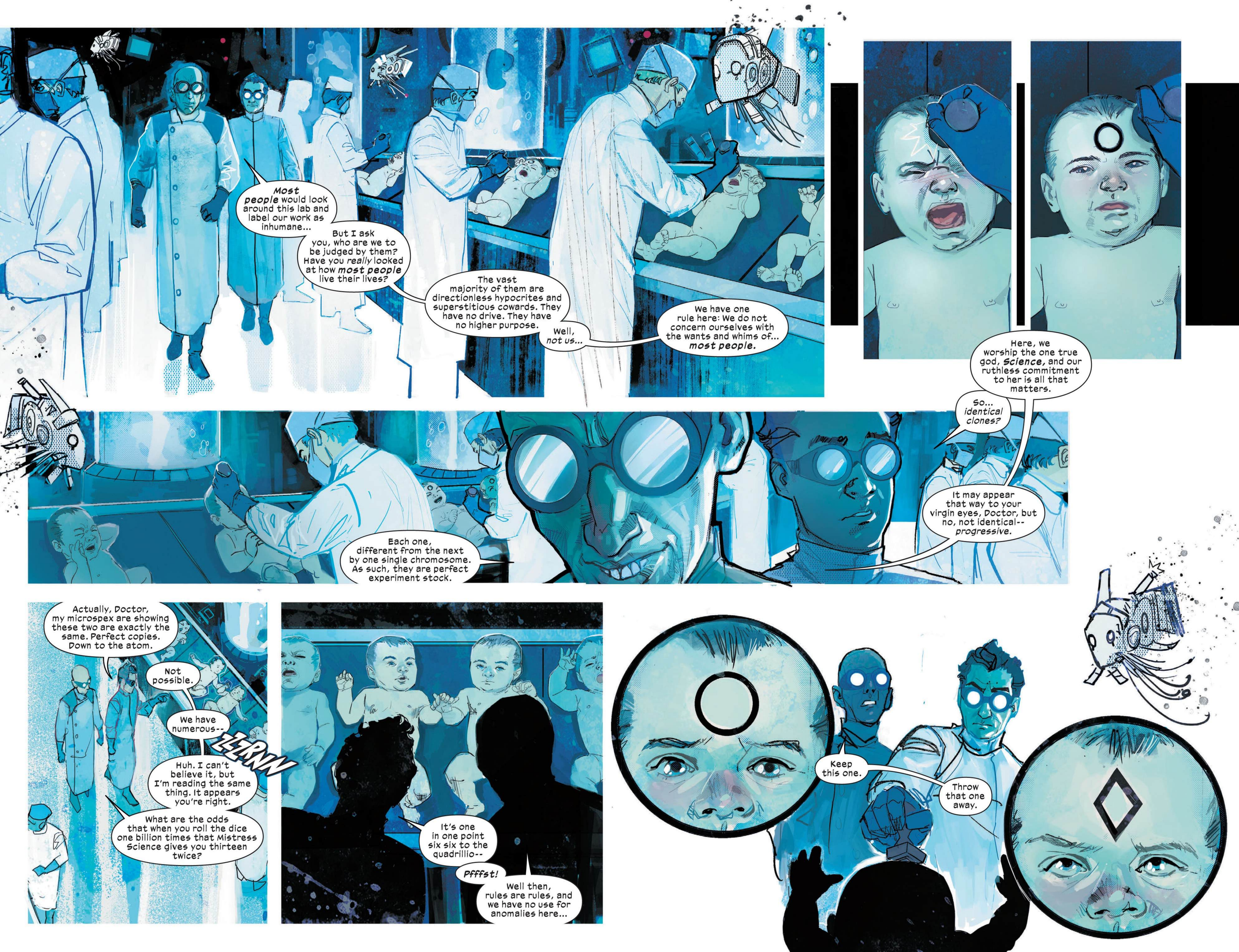



We are a baseline producer of the *ex vitro* experimental material that is at the very heart of our research into metahumanity.

In this field, we are years--*no, decades*--ahead of ***the world.***

And our goal, as it were, is ***advanced ideas...***

***Advanced Ideas...***at any cost.


Most people would look around this lab and label our work as inhumane...
But I ask you, who are we to be judged by them? Have you really looked at how most people live their lives?
The vast majority of them are directionless hypocrites and superstitious cowards. They have no drive. They have no higher purpose.
Well, not us...
We have one rule here: We do not concern ourselves with the wants and whims of... most people.
Here, we worship the one true god, Science, and our ruthless commitment to her is all that matters.
So... identical clones?
It may appear that way to your virgin eyes, Doctor, but no, not identical-- progressive.
Each one, different from the next by one single chromosome. As such, they are perfect experiment stock.
Actually, Doctor, my microspex are showing these two are exactly the same. Perfect copies. Down to the atom.
Not possible.
We have numerous--
ZZZRNN
Huh. I can't believe it, but I'm reading the same thing. It appears you're right.
What are the odds that when you roll the dice one billion times that Mistress Science gives you thirteen twice?
It's one in one point six six to the quadrillio--
Pfffst!
Well then, rules are rules, and we have no use for anomalies here...
Keep this one.
Throw that one away.

A decade later.

Reconnaissance. Today, that's the mission.

We go in. We scout the place. We get out. Any questions?

Yeah, just one. That's a terrible accent. What is that? Belgian?
Pretty sure it's Flemish.
I think it's Swiss.

Flemish is Belgian, you big dummy.

No. Flemish is Dutch.

None of which explains why we're takin' orders from some pastry boy in the middle of monarchy land without a single star or stripe in sight.

We're headed this way, gentlemen...

As for why you're here...that's simple.

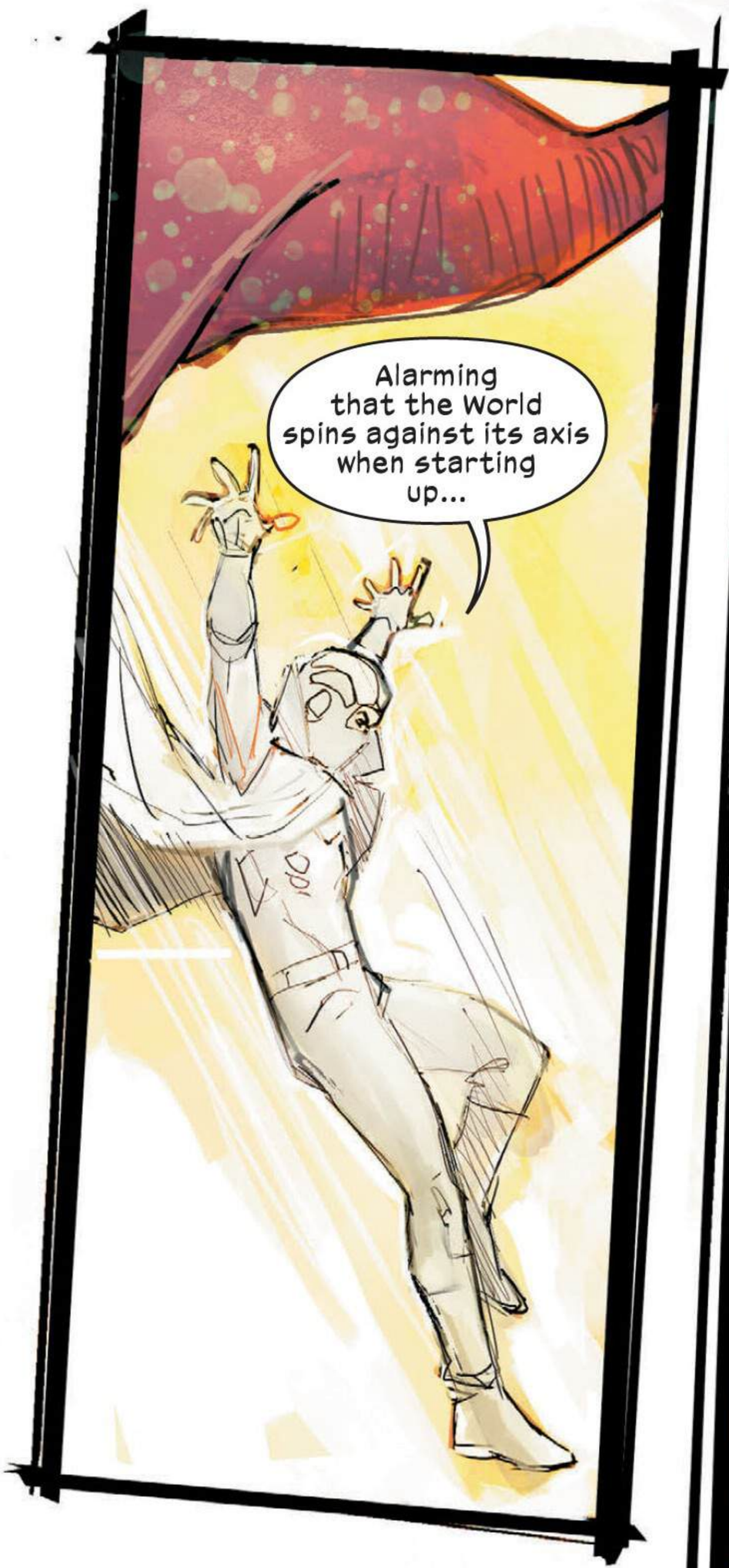
*Yeah.* And instead you got us.

What is this place?

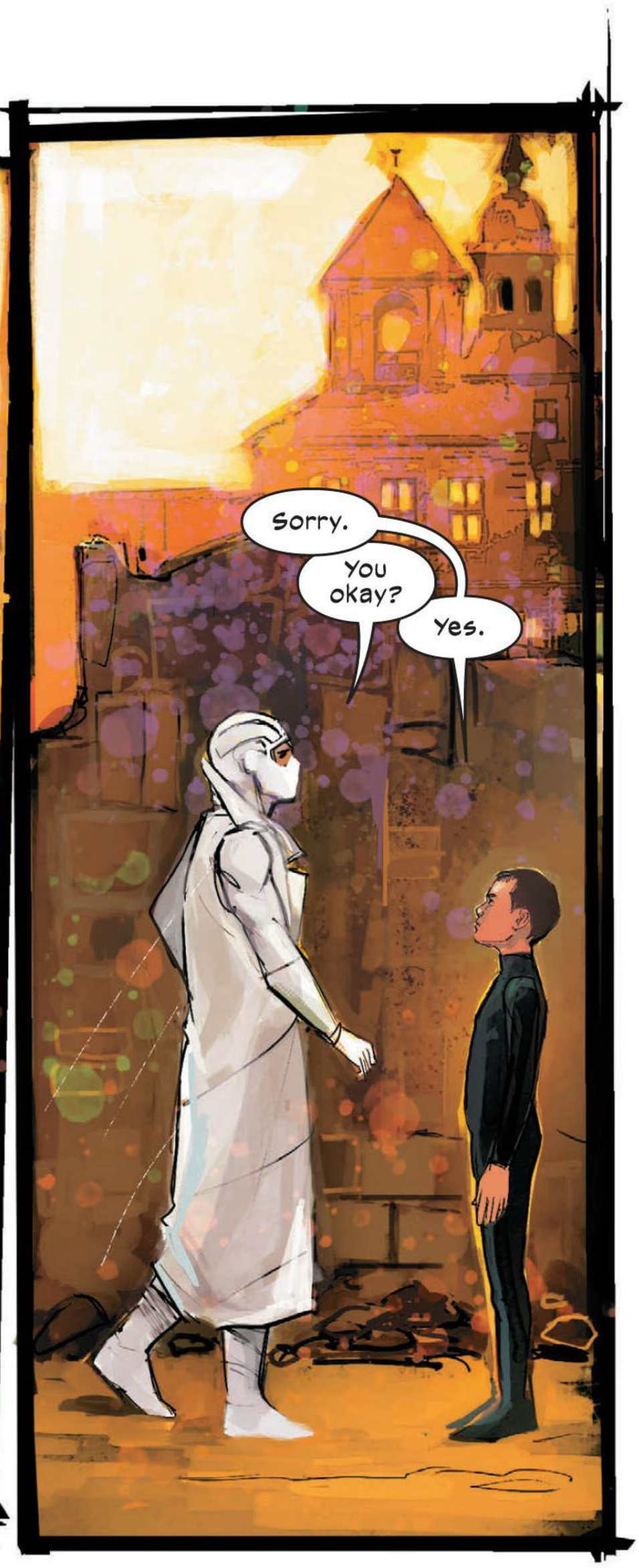
I don't think it has a formal name, but I hear some of the men who built it have taken to calling it ***the World.***

So we just, what, look around... or are you lookin' for somethin' specific?
This is a super-science lab where illegal--*and monstrous*--research is being done.
I was *born* here.
This way! Head for cover!
That's funny. It doesn't look Flemish.
*Hey, Nick!* We gotta get out of here.
Negative.
Mission's done when the mission's done, soldier.
Actually, Captain, you and your men have done enough by drawing their attention.
I think you mean--
Hold on. *You hear that?*
You head back to the exit.
And where are you headed?
Where do you think, Captain?
HOWLERS--TAKE THEM DOWN!
*sigh*
Of course it's robots.

"Deeper into the World, of course."
KABAM!
Ah! There you are!


Alarming that the World spins against its axis when starting up...

A little retrograde before propelling itself forward...
And you, still a boy. *Unnerving.*

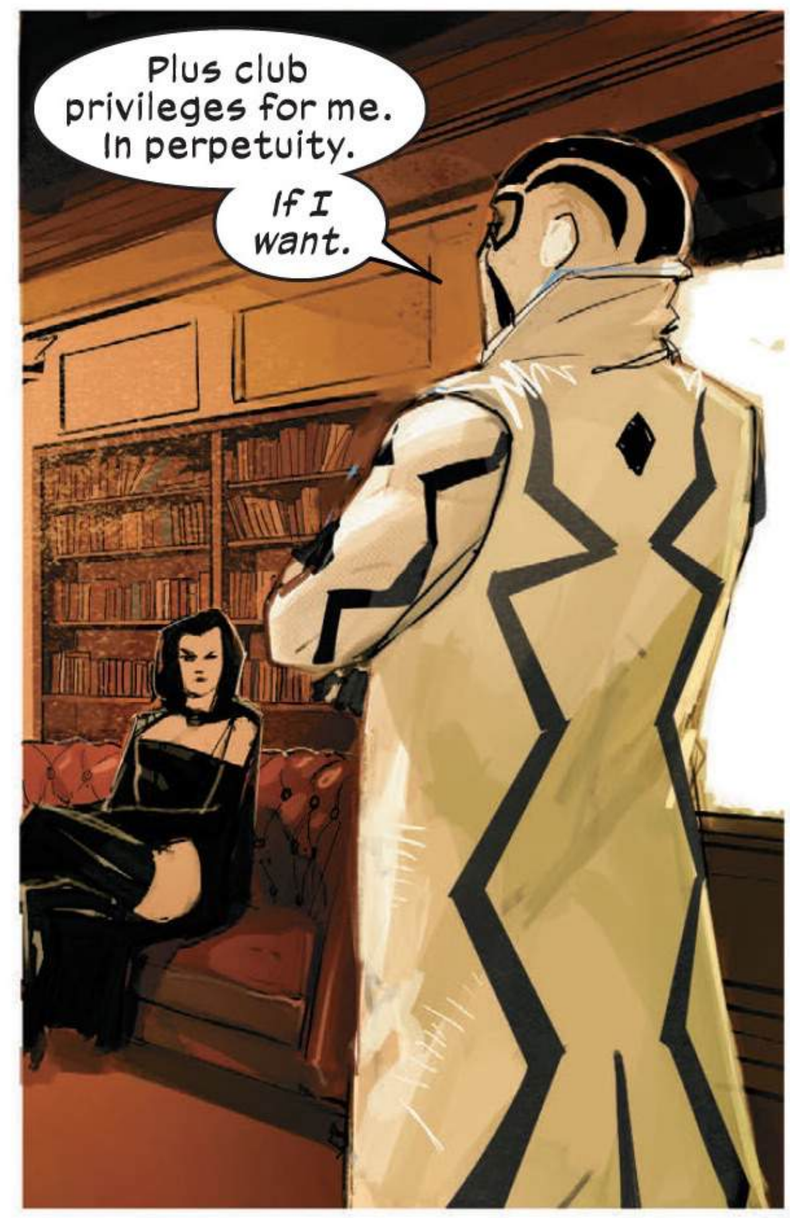

Sorry.
You okay?
Yes.

Do you want to leave?

...
Not yet.

A decade after that.
And so, if we have an understanding...

We of the Hellfire Club's Inner Circle will assist your entrance into this place--*the World*--and in return you will not oppose our asserted rights of pillage and plunder.
Is that the gist of it?


Plus club privileges for me. In perpetuity.
If I want.

Small price to pay--*so it's hard to say no*--but my question is this: Why do you need our help?
Surely you can get in all by yourself.

The point is you're a distraction. What I need is time inside. Uninterrupted. Alone.
That's your answer--but here's a question from me:
What's that smell?

Oh... It's baby oil.
Could be butter.
If you don't want to know...don't ask.

Very well, Mister Fantomex.
You have a deal.

Take us to your World...

"...so that we might have our way with it."

Hmmmm.

Yes, quite threatening. *Foreboding.* ***Terrifying.***

I may never sleep again.

CHOMP!
Gods!
CRACK!
What kind of hell is this?
We've been over this...
It's not Hell...it's *the World.*
Shaw! *This is foolish. I'm leaving!*
*Now!*
*Dammit!* I'll remember this... *I promise you.*
And I promise you, we had a deal... and I expect you to live up to it.
Oh...?
And best of luck finding your way out.

How you doing?
I'm fine.
8

You definitely look better.
Thank you.
So are you ready to leave yet?
No. Work to do.
Many children of the World to raise.
In fact...
I think, from now on, it's best if you stay away.

Another decade passes.
"Stay away," he says...
Well, I may just never go back.

The following decade.
I'm going back.
And I know your first question: Why now?
Actually, I was wondering why us?
Yes. Of course.
Why you? Well, first I went to the Avengers, but I looked around the room and saw a collection of has-beens and pretenders and thought to myself...
Not good enough.
After that, I went to the Defenders, and the Champions...even the Thunderbolts...
And in each one, I saw no one of quality.
So I came to you:
The Humonganauts.

Red Eye...
Emotipool...

Rustbot...
And Mohawk Person...

CLICK!

You are *the best*...

*The best* your generation has to offer...

And the perfect bait necessary if we're going to pull off this rescue mission...

So we're going in there...

The World.

And I want you to know that I couldn't be prouder to be fighting alongside all of you.
Wait a second... Did you say "bait"?
I don't think so. You must have misheard me.
Zoiks!
It seems we were expected...
Hello. Uh, we come in peace.
Organisms! Sterile environment breached! World under threat!
That's new.
AAIIIEEEEE!
AAIIIEEEEE!
You bastard!
You knew this was going to happen!
No. This is definitely not what I was expecting to happen.
Yes, you probably were never going to survive...
AIIIEEEE!

"But I was absolutely expecting to make it past the front door."

I wonder how...

I think we're the same. *That's how.*
You're like a memory of a time long lost. Something I saw out of the corner my eye a hundred years ago.
I see you now, but why can't you see?
We're building something here.
It cannot be stopped.

The decade after that.
Who's the weird guy with the phone?
Is he a friend of yours? Because he keeps winking at me...

I'd like to order some medicine...
...for headaches...Tylenol... whatever...
Only one of these idiots has a healing factor.

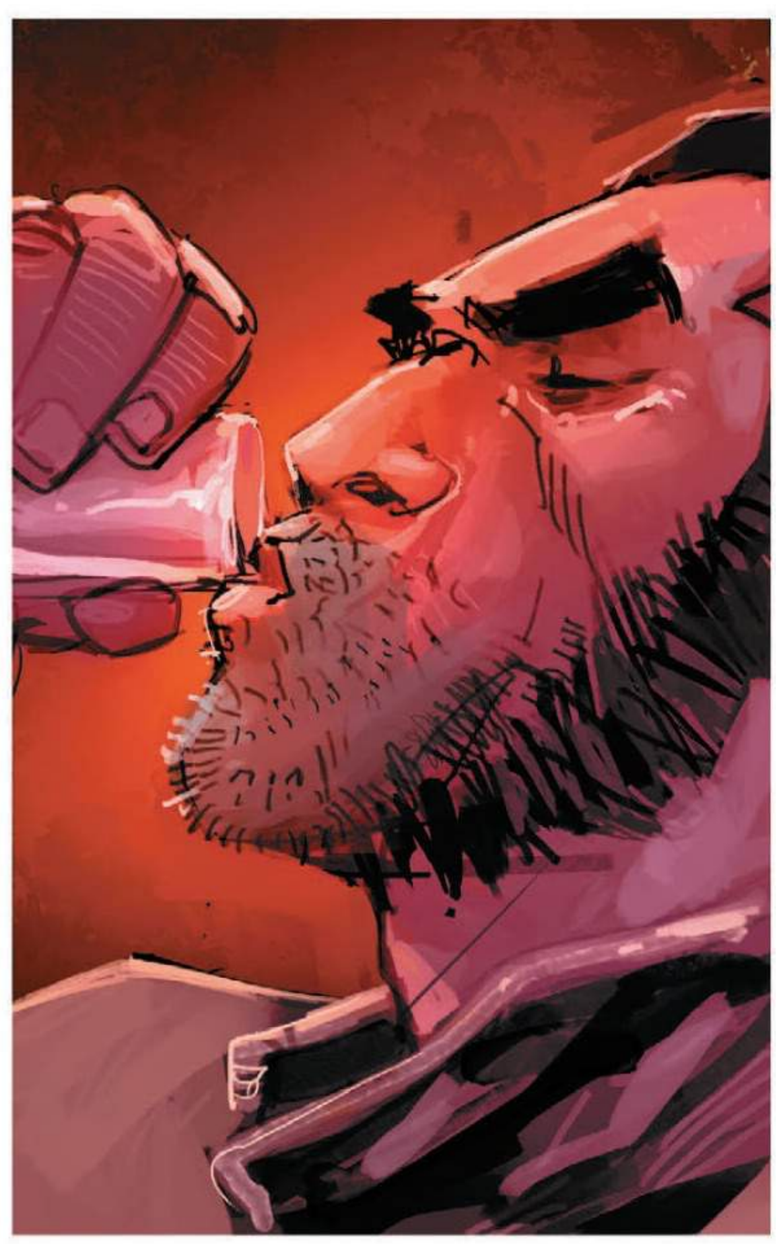
He calls himself Fantomex.
My contact.
I'm going with him to find out who I am, where I came from.

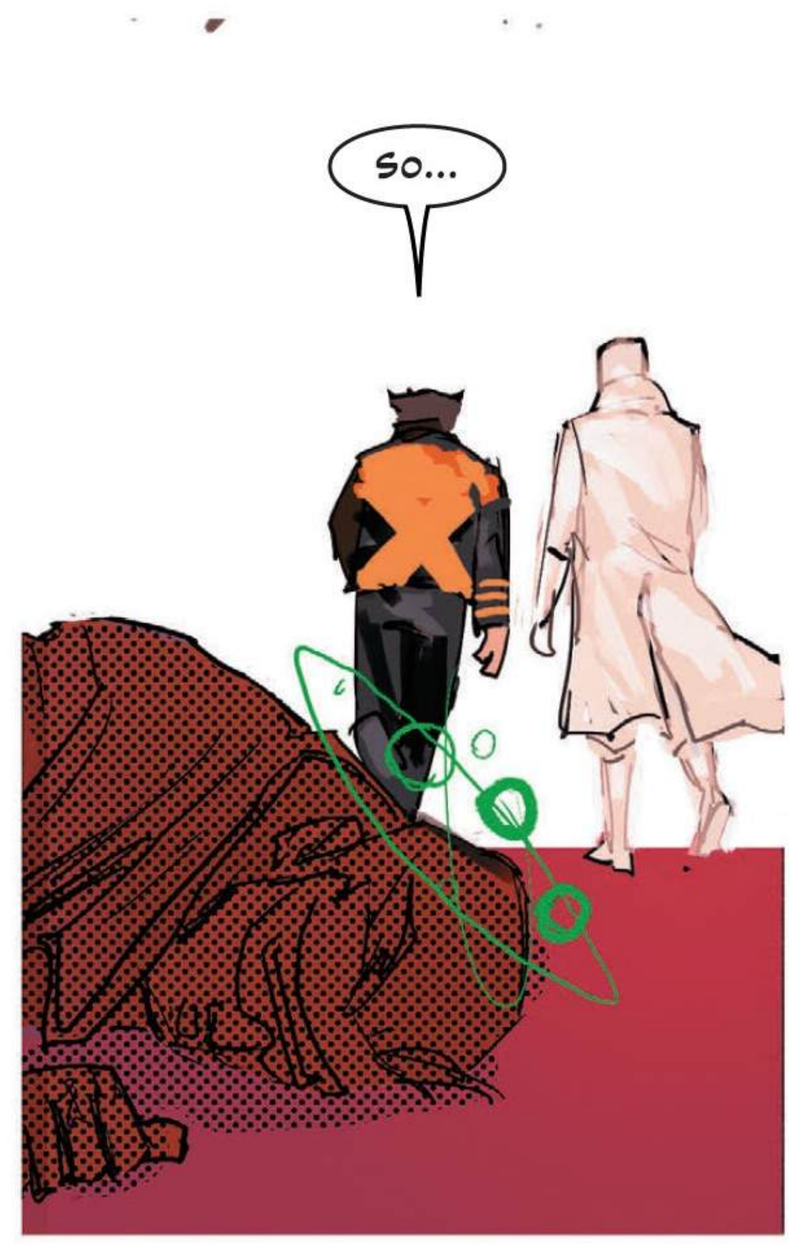
Forget it, Logan.
I'm so sick of having "missions" and trying to be some kind of perfect mutant soldier-teacher or whatever it is we are today...

...
...
--

Some drinker.

This guy's one of the best.
Trust me, Fantomex, it's like I promised...
...there's nobody I'd rather have in my corner than Scott Summers.




So...

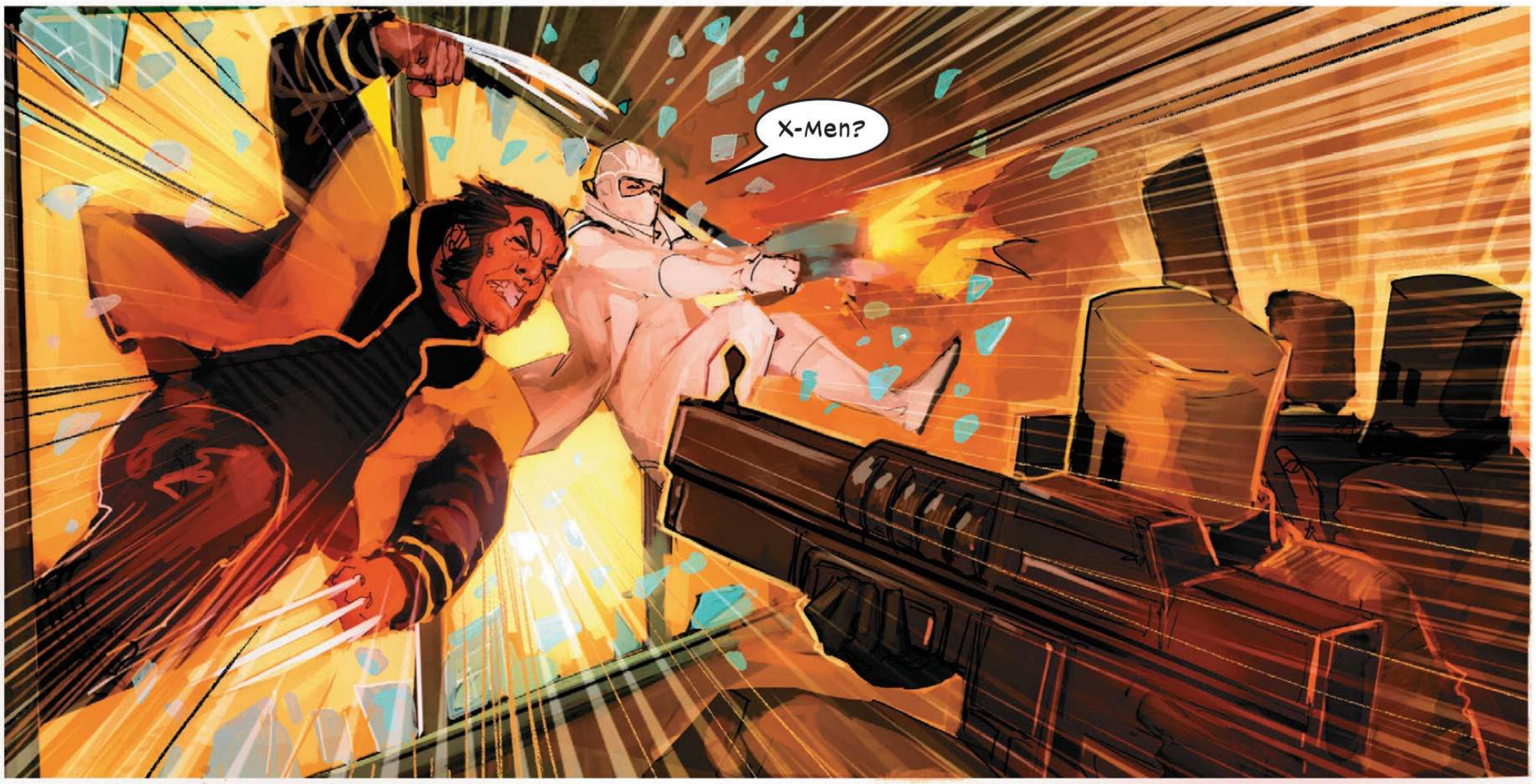
"What's the name of this place again?"

It's a square mile of experimental ***micro-reality*** with its own culture, its own religion, its own ***history***...a giant ***petri dish*** where the lives of unsuspecting humans are ***used up*** in days, even ***moments.***

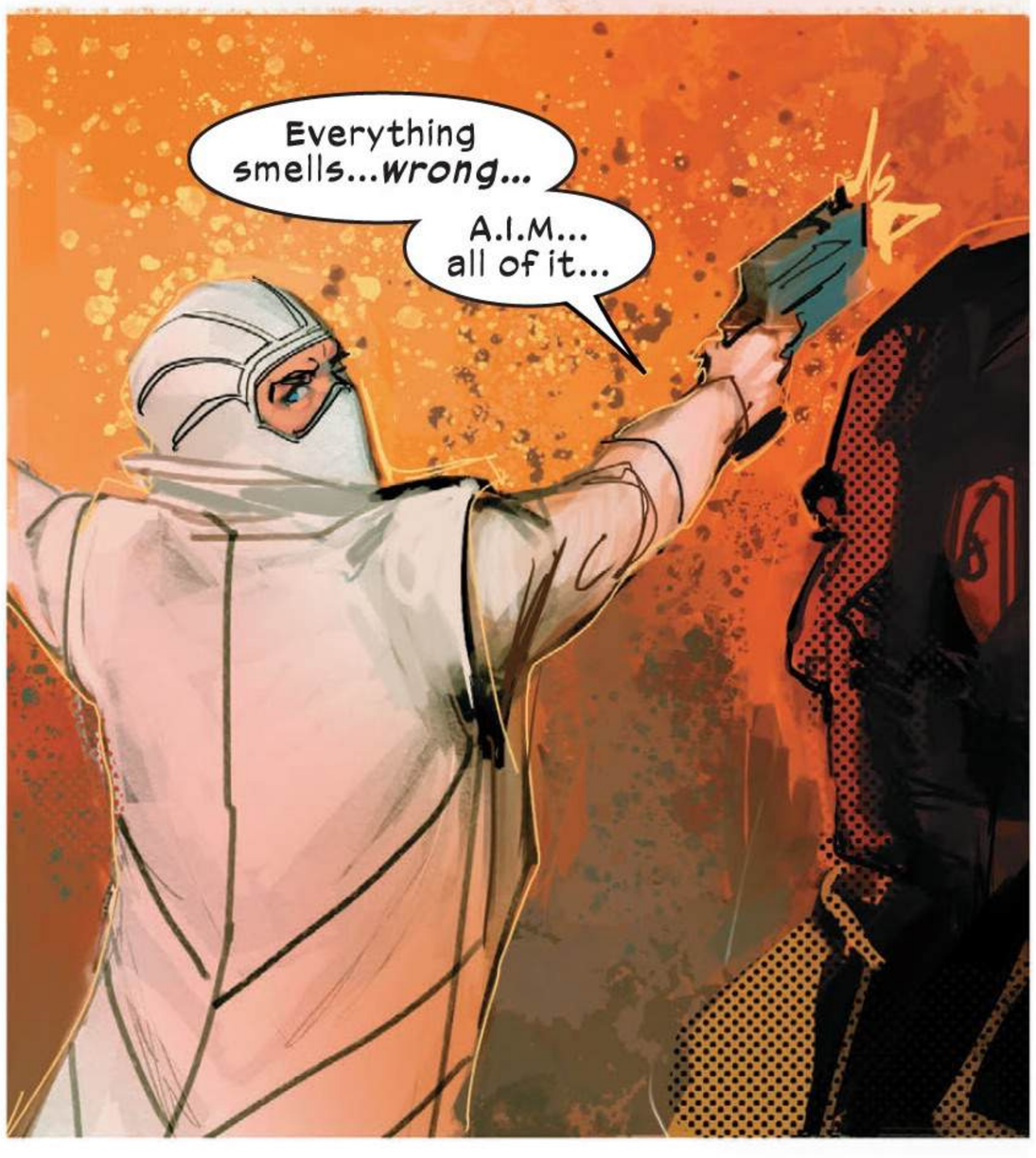
A torture chamber.

Hrmpt.
You ever walk in a place and just have an immediate desire to tear it down?

There are X-Men here!
Hurry!


X-Men?

You should be so lucky.


Everything smells...wrong...
A.I.M... all of it...

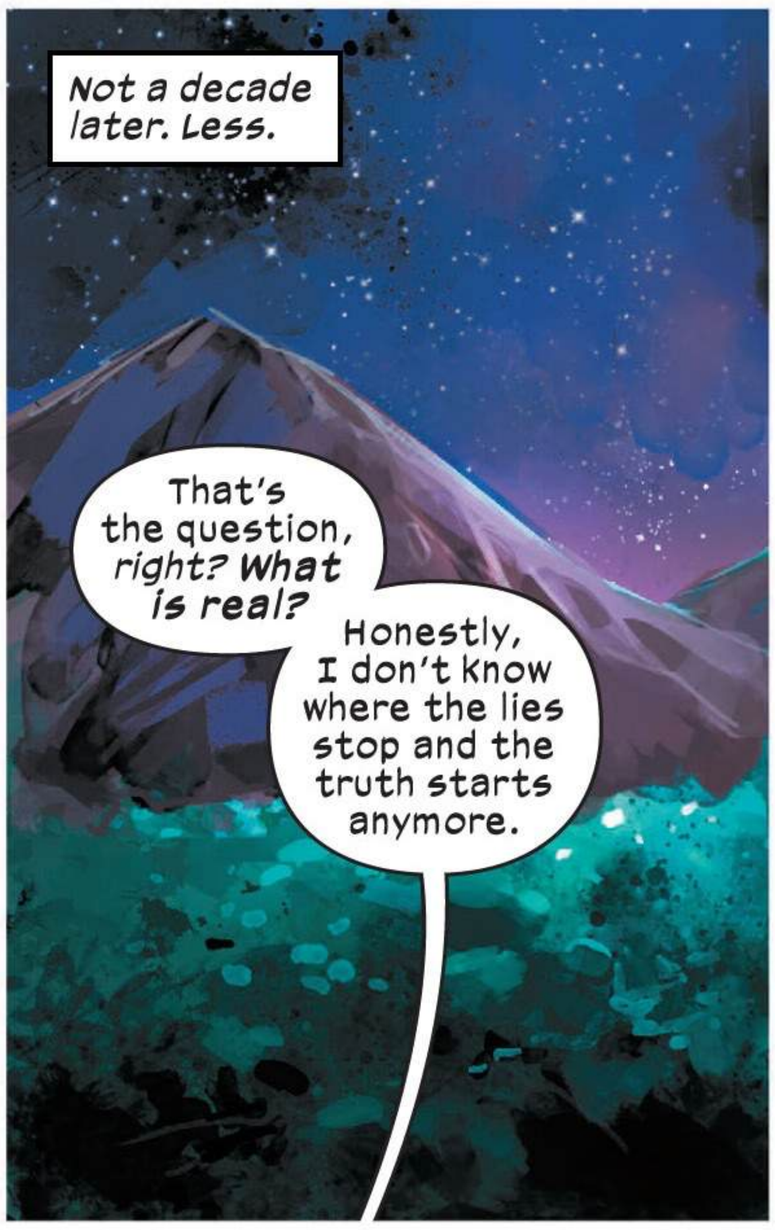
This is the smell of old sins revisited.

Of claims being made on what was wrought.

!!!

Organisms! Sterile environment breached! World under threat!

Do I build a *new* prison here in the ruins...
...or dare go *beyond?*
I remember the idea of you. Like a cave painting from a thousand years ago.
Some primal direction of man.
Some primal direction of me.
*Are you real?*


Not a decade later. Less.
That's the question, right? What is real?
Honestly, I don't know where the lies stop and the truth starts anymore.

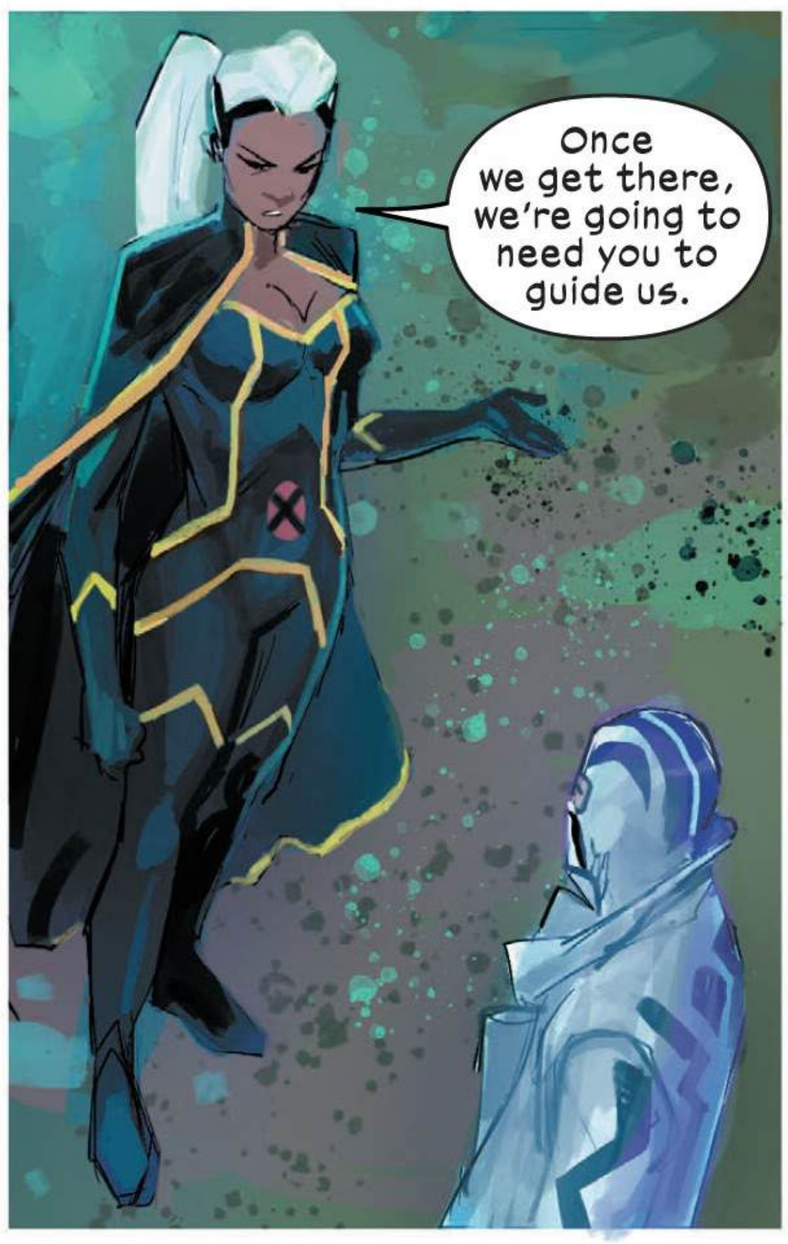
It's all just stories.
Hey, man, listen...
I'm just an evil scientist from Boston. Can you spare me the Flemish therapist routine?

I'm just here for money.

Fantomex.

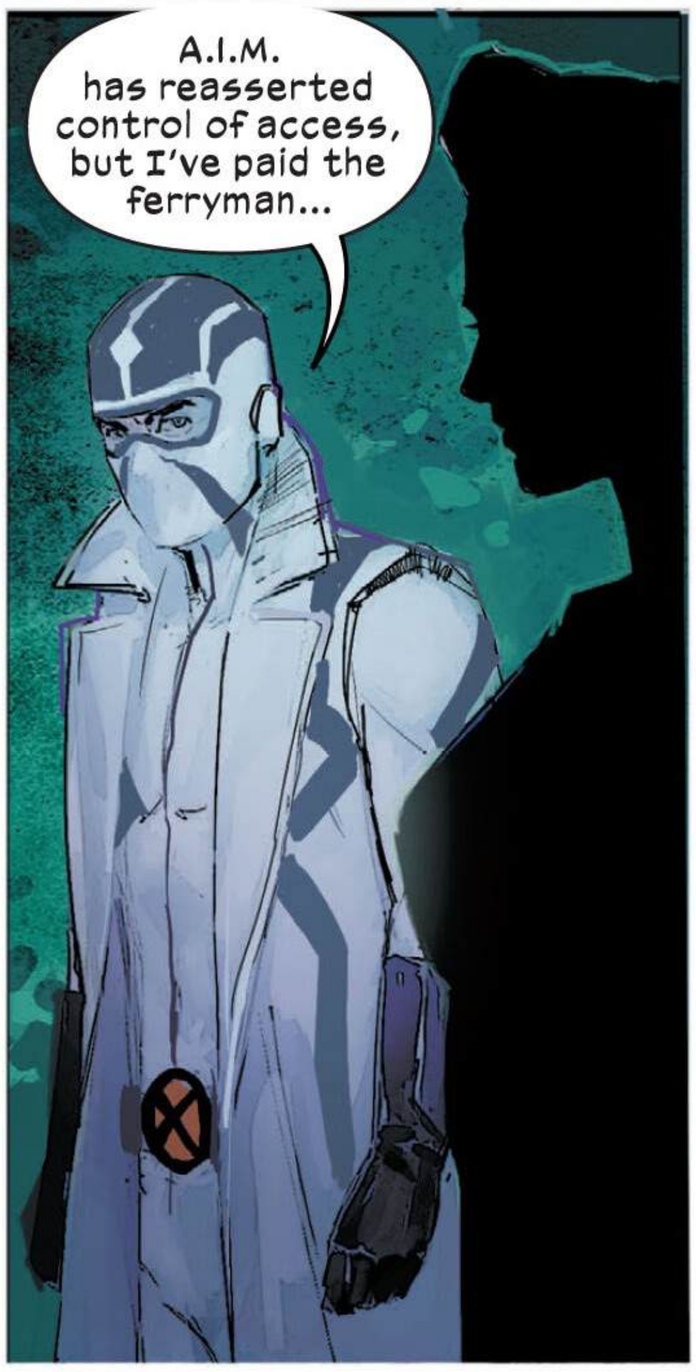
Mutants.
You rang?

There's no other way to say it...
I'm dying, and our best mutant scientists believe the only way to save me is inside the World.


Once we get there, we're going to need you to guide us.

You understand how it works, yeah?

Yes. Temporal nonsense.
That's the gist of it.
I can't promise you anything.
But you'll do it?


A.I.M. has reasserted control of access, but I've paid the ferryman...

I'll get you in the door.

I guess the only question left is...
What's in it for you?

Because I know you don't do charity...
And you sure don't believe in goodwill...
So can we trust you?

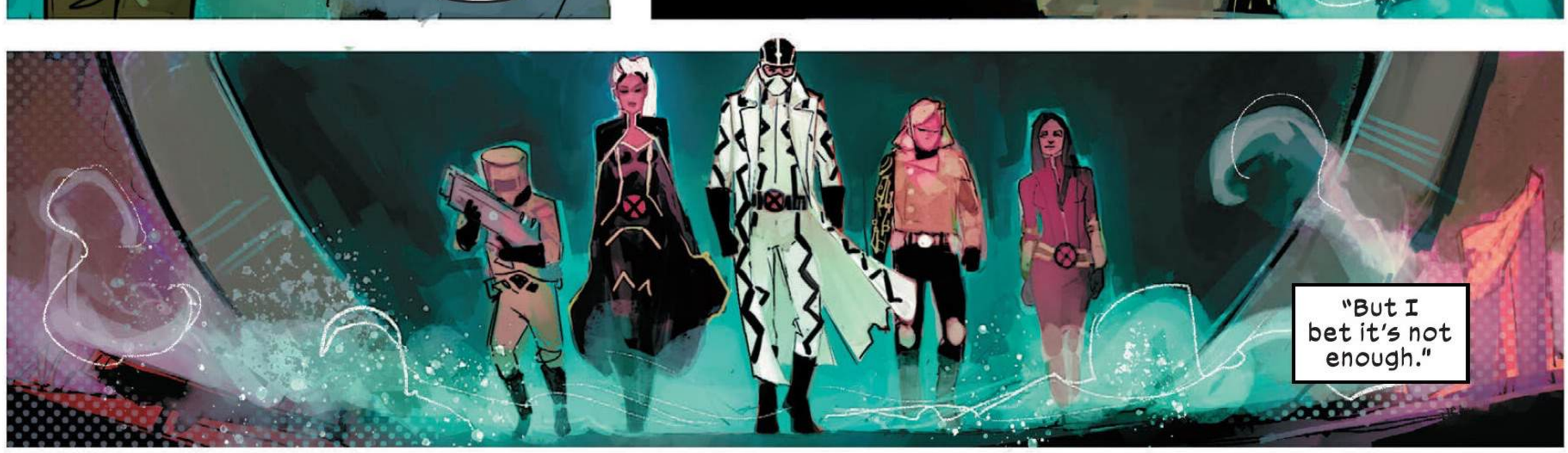
Normally?

Probably not.

But I'm working through some of my own stuff... so maybe just this once...

Hey, man...
Mind if I ask what he's paying you?

A lot.
Seriously, it's a ridiculous amount. Like, change your identity, leave your wife and kids, disappear forever money...
Okay...

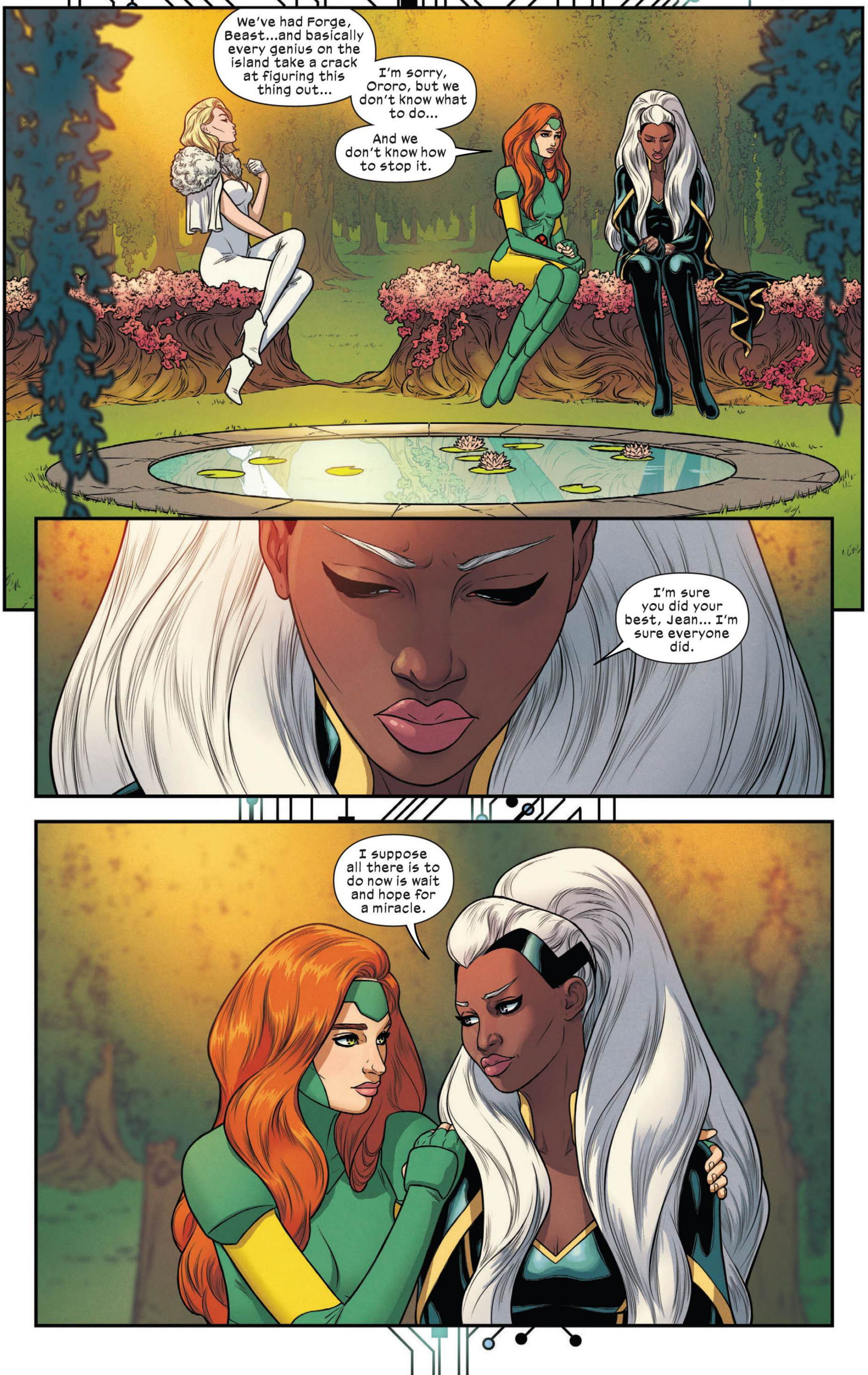

"But I bet it's not enough."

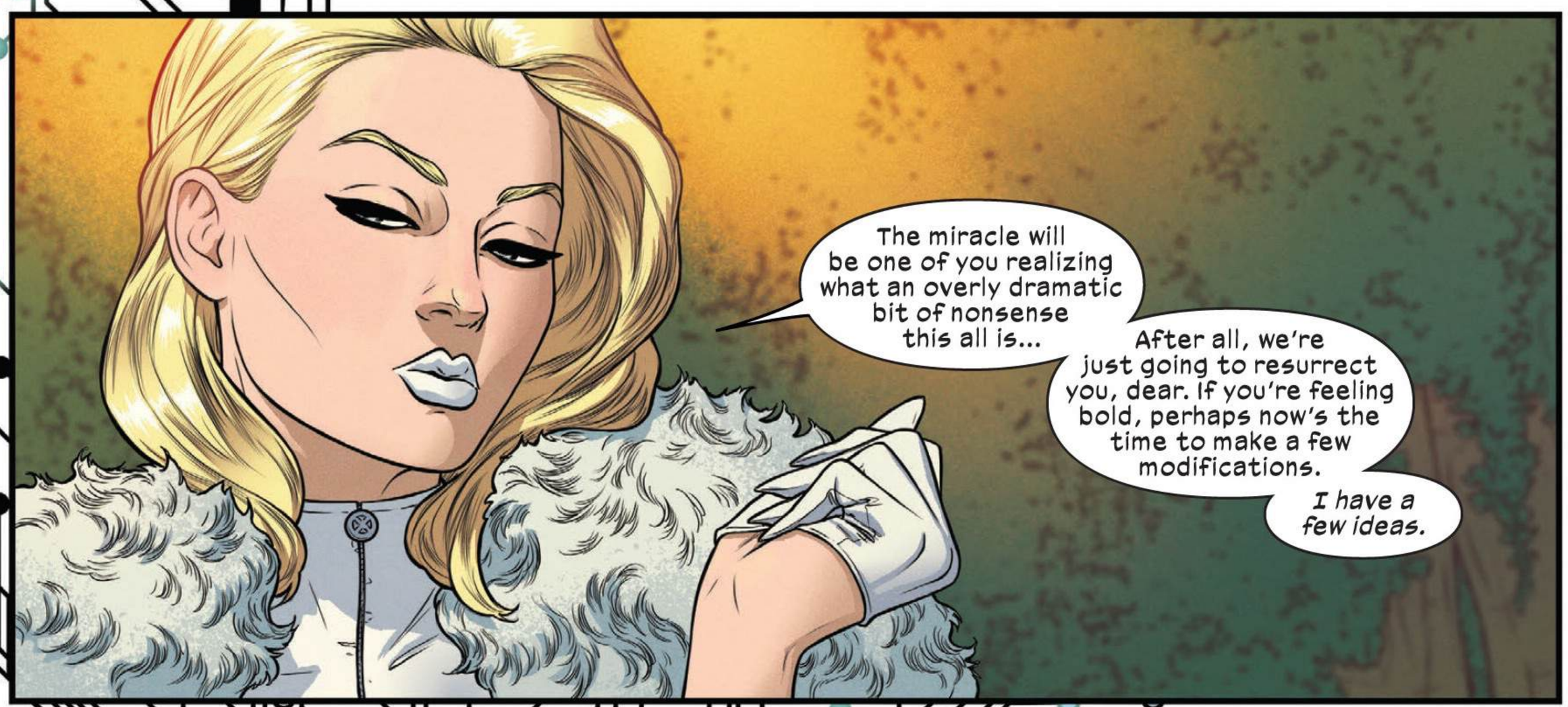
All right...
One last time...
Welcome to the World.

# Disintegration

# 16

Then.
As far as anyone can tell, it appears as if you have some kind of Techno-Organic virus coursing through your body.
The virus is not one we've experienced before... it's similar in effect, but slower in its methodology.
It will spread--*unabated*--until it consumes the host.
We've tried every blood replacement or purification method we could think of.

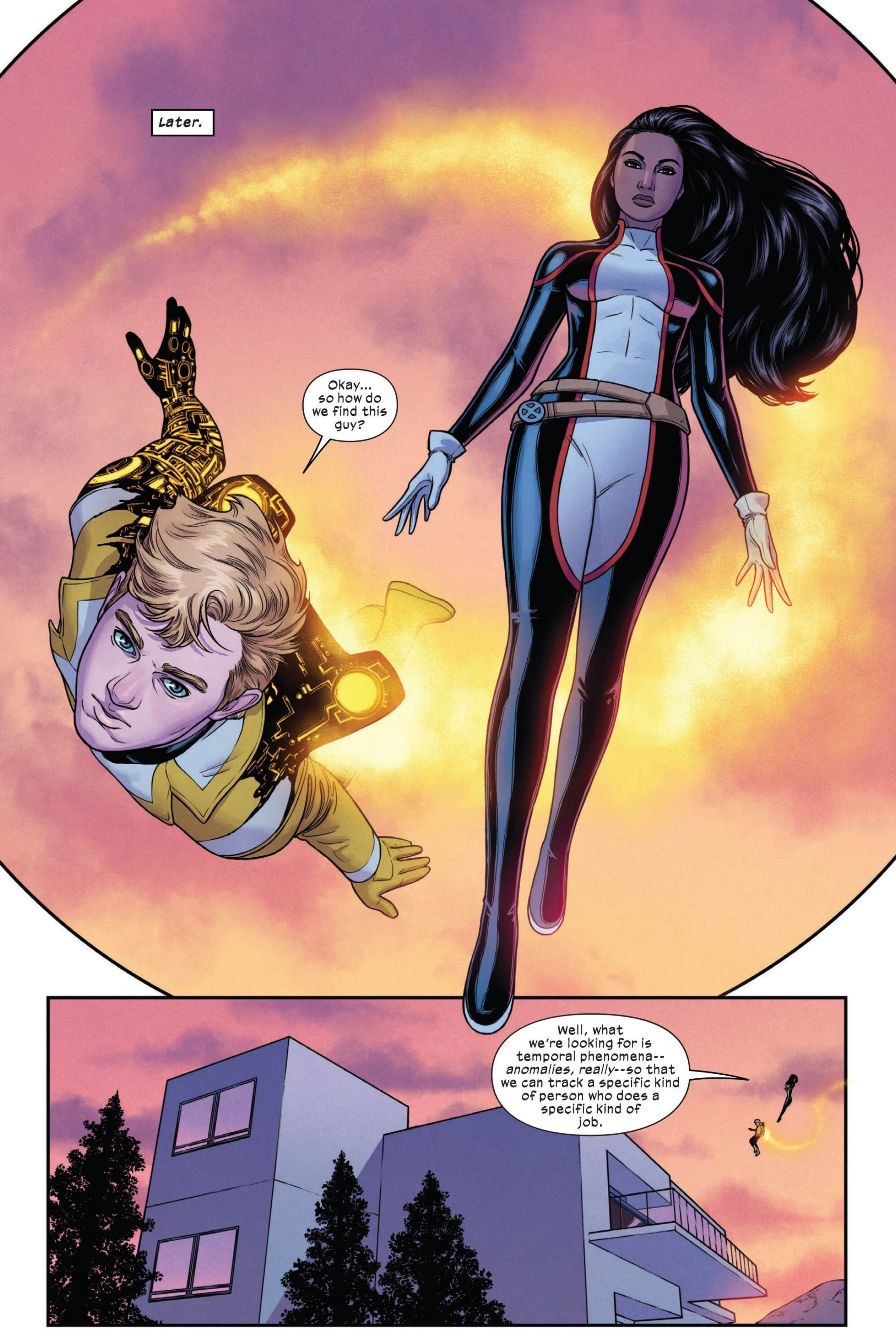

We've had Forge, Beast...and basically every genius on the island take a crack at figuring this thing out...
I'm sorry, Ororo, but we don't know what to do...
And we don't know how to stop it.
I'm sure you did your best, Jean... I'm sure everyone did.
I suppose all there is to do now is wait and hope for a miracle.

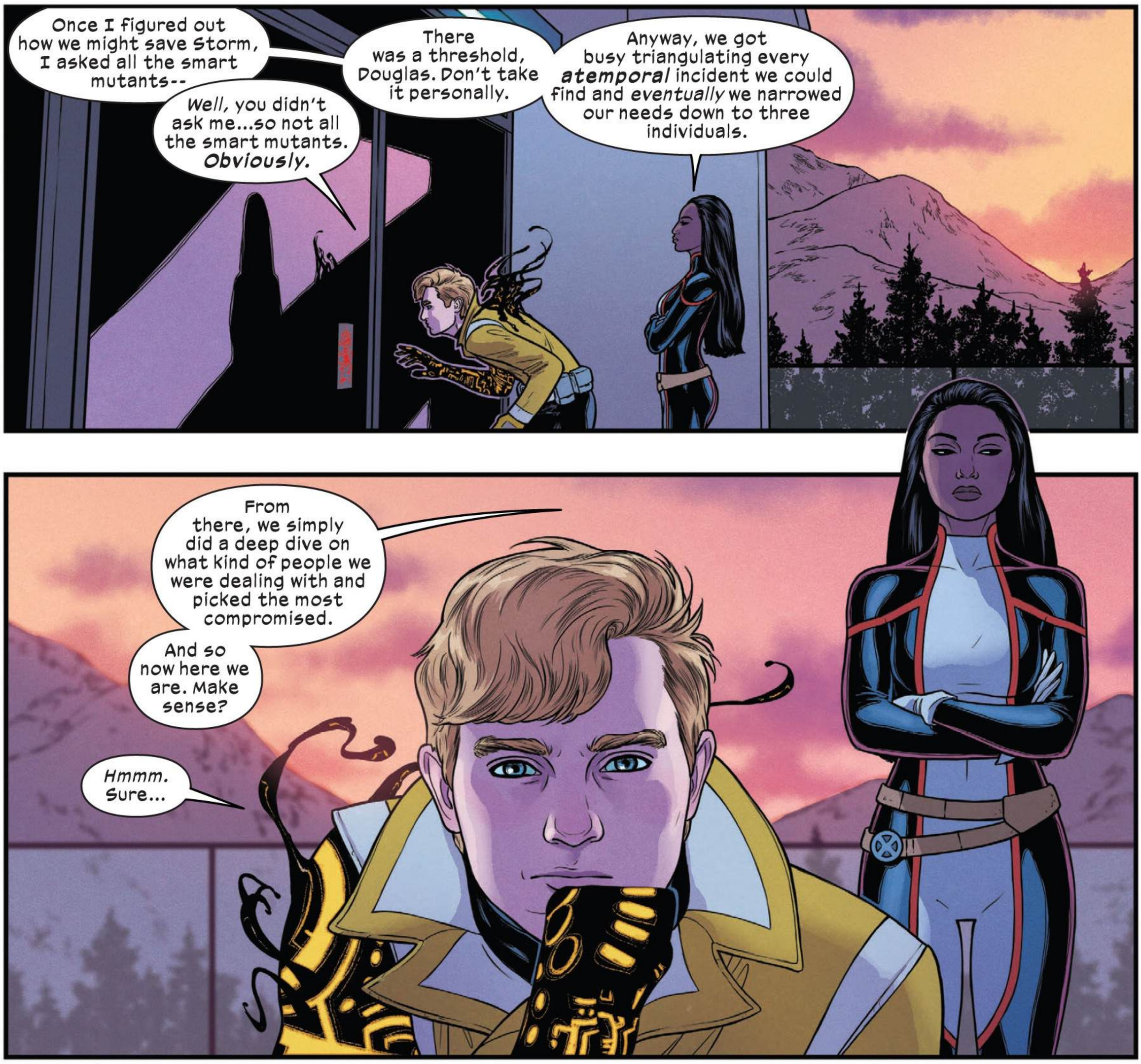

The miracle will be one of you realizing what an overly dramatic bit of nonsense this all is...
After all, we're just going to resurrect you, dear. If you're feeling bold, perhaps now's the time to make a few modifications.
*I have a few ideas.*

Emma. What the he--
No. It's fine. *Let her talk.*

She's so very good at talking.
*Thank you.* I often feel an underappreci--
Excuse me.

Sorry to interrupt...
But I looked at Storm's medical results and...*I think I know how to save you.*


Later.
Okay... so how do we find this guy?
Well, what we're looking for is temporal phenomena--*anomalies, really*--so that we can track a specific kind of person who does a specific kind of job.


Once I figured out how we might save Storm, I asked all the smart mutants--
Well, you didn't ask me...so not all the smart mutants. Obviously.
There was a threshold, Douglas. Don't take it personally.
Anyway, we got busy triangulating every atemporal incident we could find and eventually we narrowed our needs down to three individuals.
From there, we simply did a deep dive on what kind of people we were dealing with and picked the most compromised.
And so now here we are. Make sense?
Hmmm. Sure...

Hey, I think this door's got some kind of alarm system or booby trap rigged to it.
Not sure how we're going to sneak in.

ESHRRRIPP
Or we could not sneak in at all...
I guess that works.

I was wondering when you were going to show up, man...but there's no need to be so aggro with my do--

*Hey!* Hold on a second...

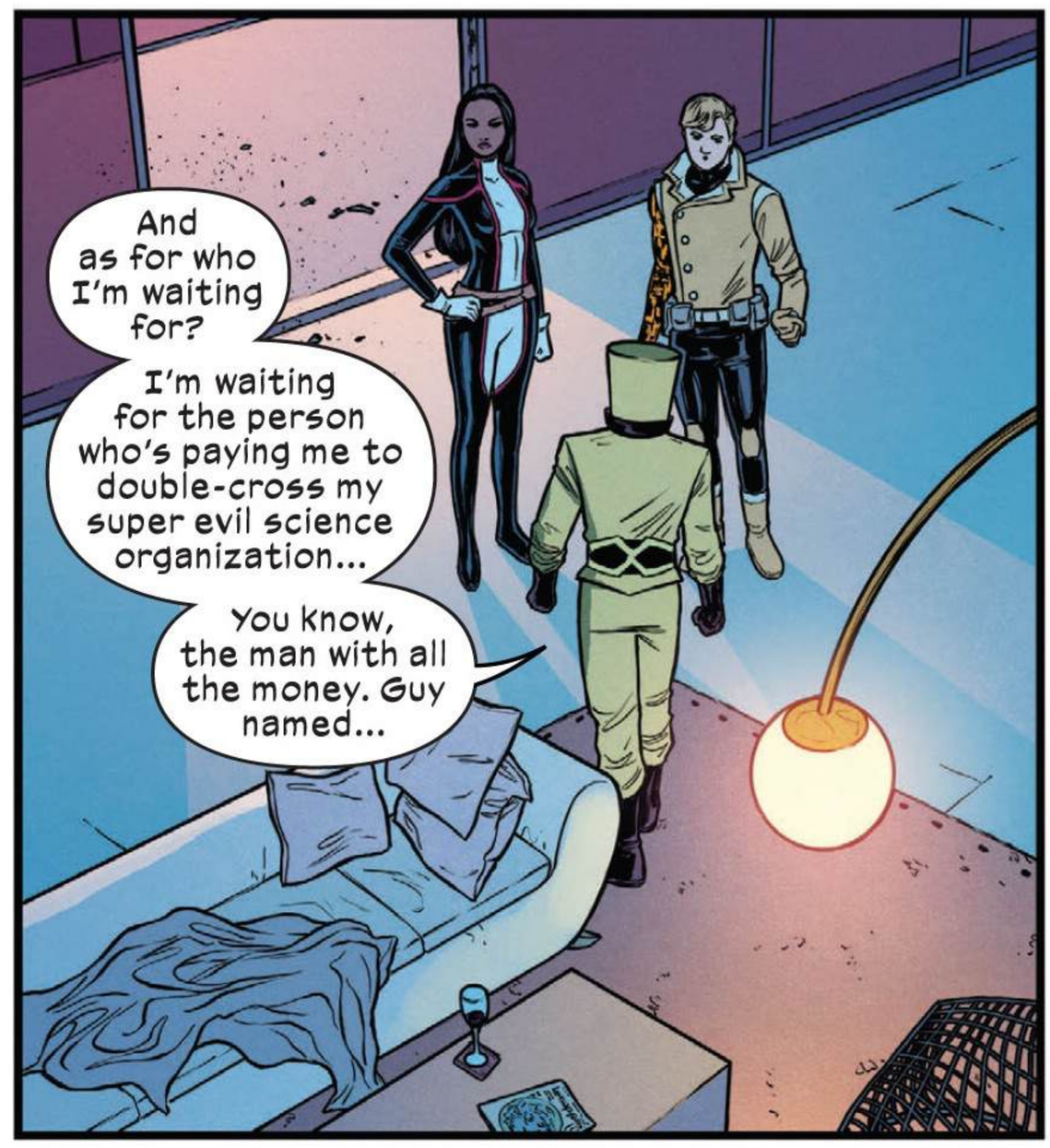
You are not who I was expecting. *Who are you?*

Here's a better question:

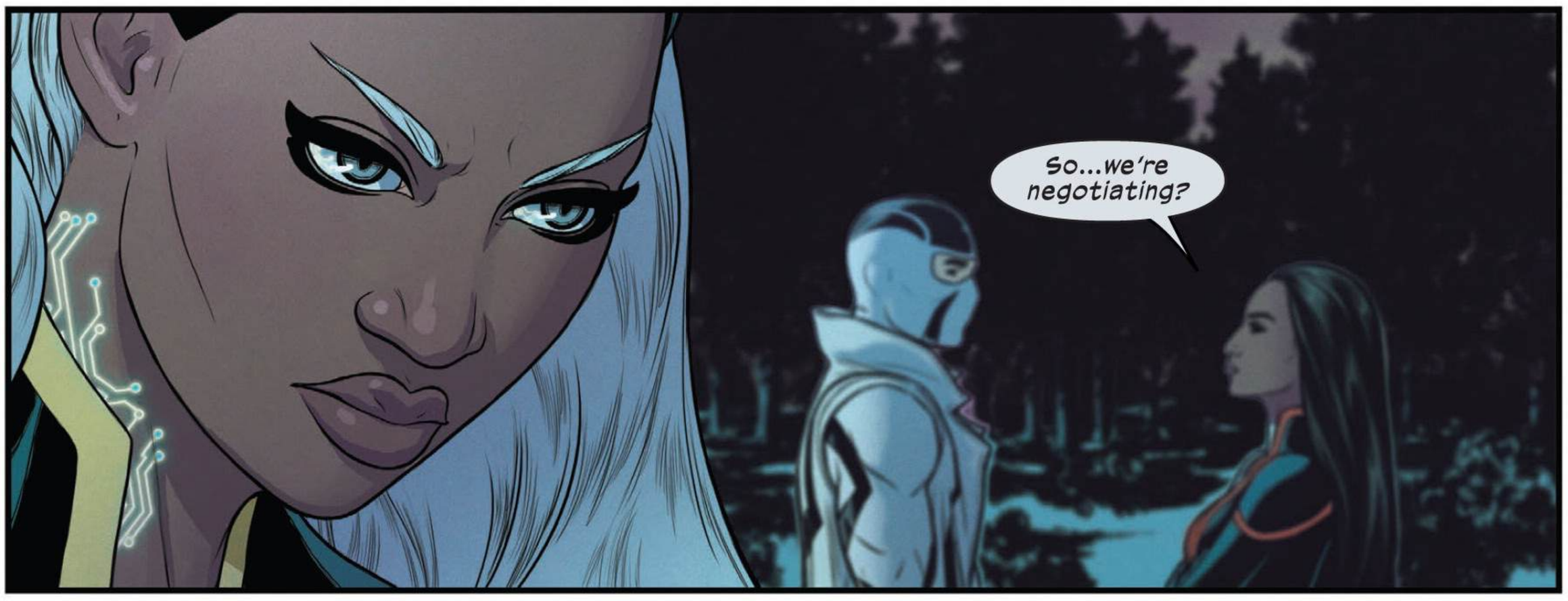
Who were you expecting... *and why?*

Here's an even better question:

Do you really just hang out all day wearing that getup? Doesn't seem practical.



Fantomex.
Okay, so I know I agreed to help, but I feel guilty, and I need to come clean about something.
You feel guilty? Really? YOU?
Guilty might not be the right word... It's probably more along the lines of I promised this idiot a bunch of money to get us inside and I can't actually pay.
I mean, most of these guys don't make it through these things anyway, but just in case, could you extend to me some petty cash...a line of credit...something like that?
Wait, what?

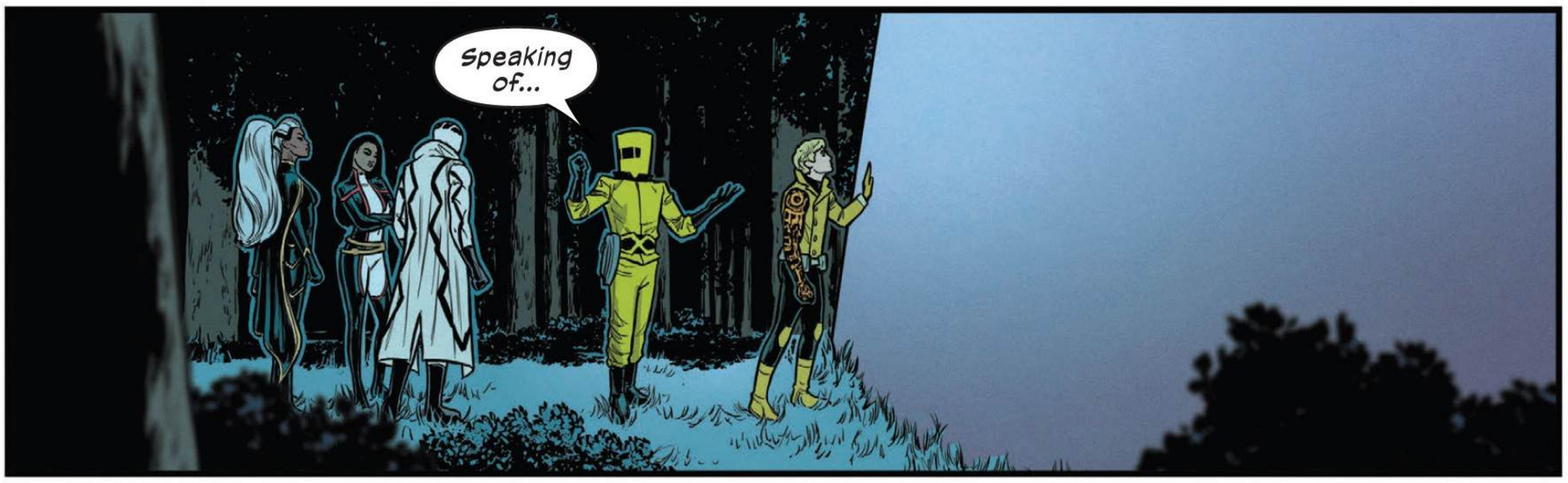

So...we're negotiating?

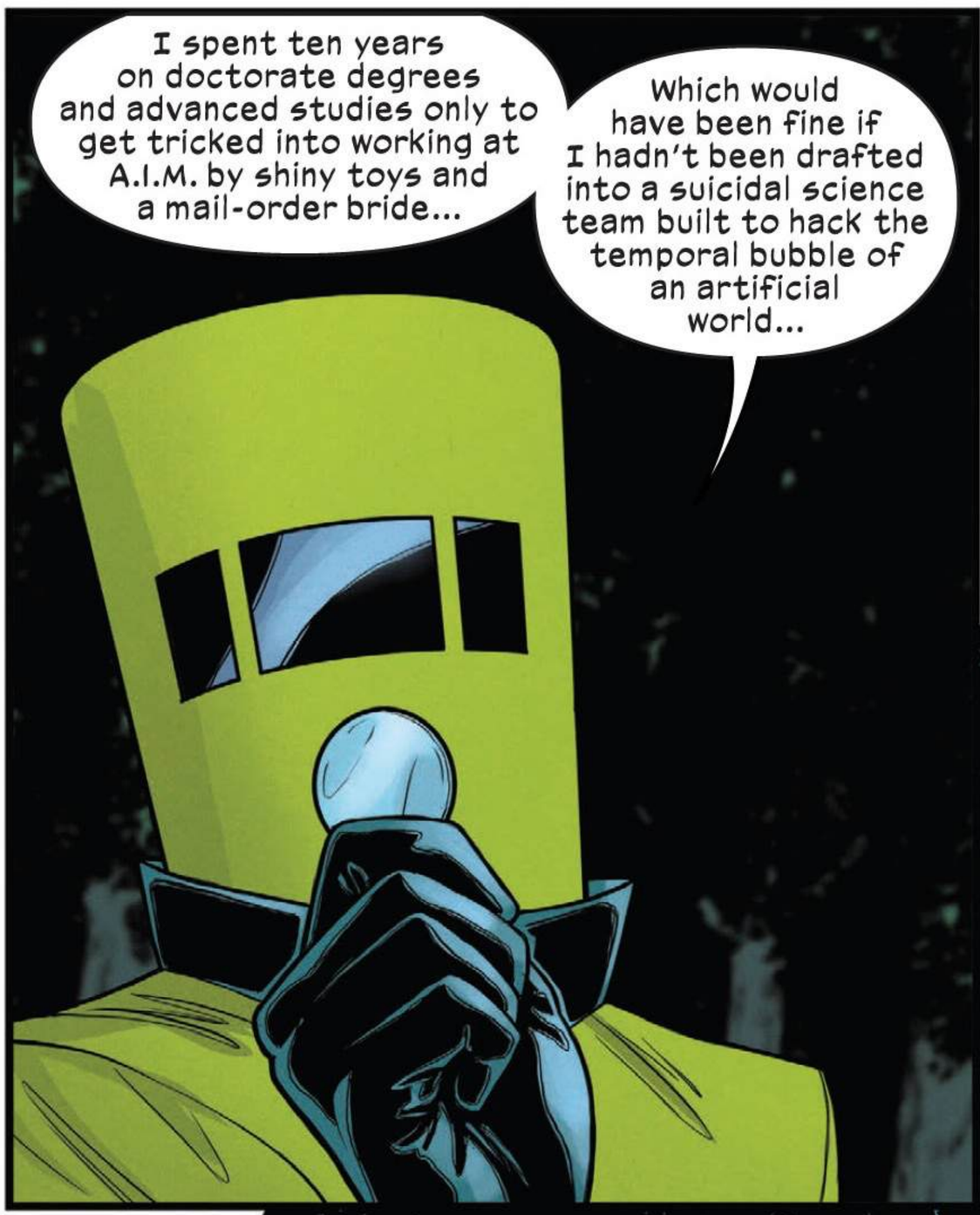
I don't know how much juice you've got, honestly.
You need to get inside. This guy needs to get paid. You've got the money...
Really, this is only going to end one way.

Well, I'm going to get something out of you.
So what's it going to be?

RRRRUMbLLe
Uh-oh.

The two of you are *haggling* while my life lies in the *balance.*
*I'm putting an end to this now.*
So...
You *are* paying.
That's all I was asking for.

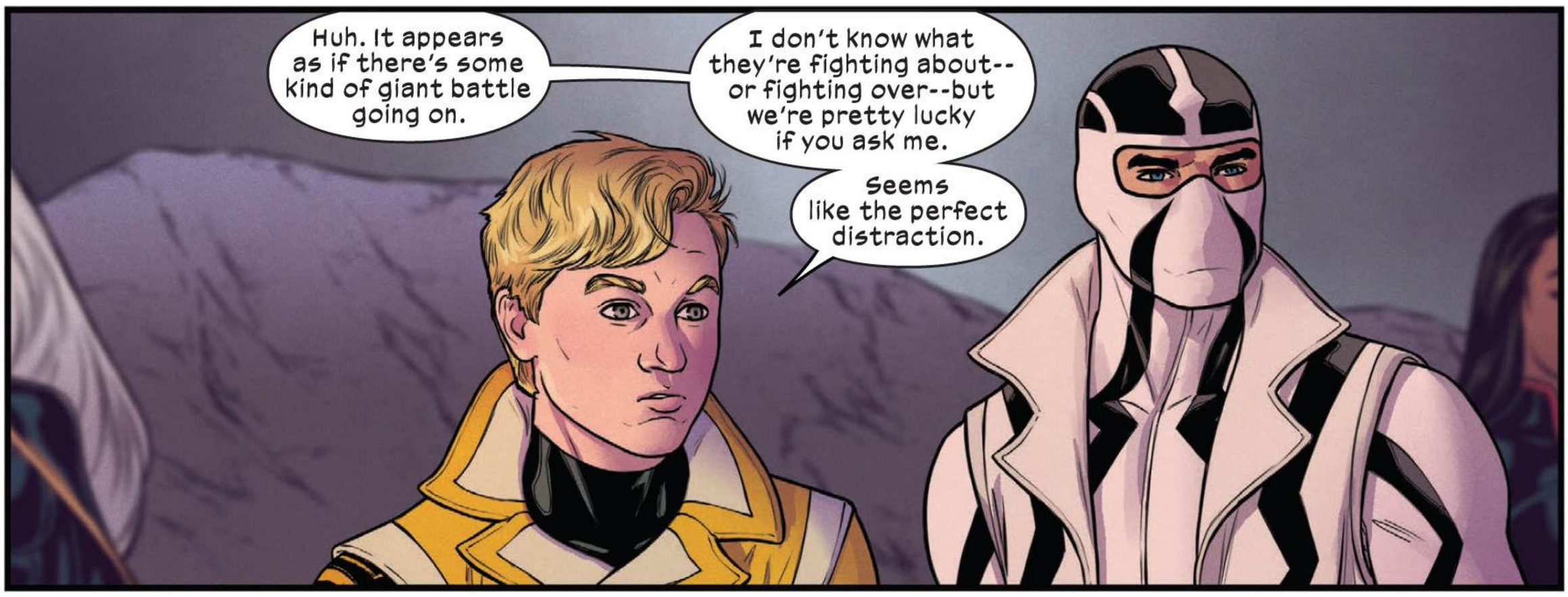

Speaking of...

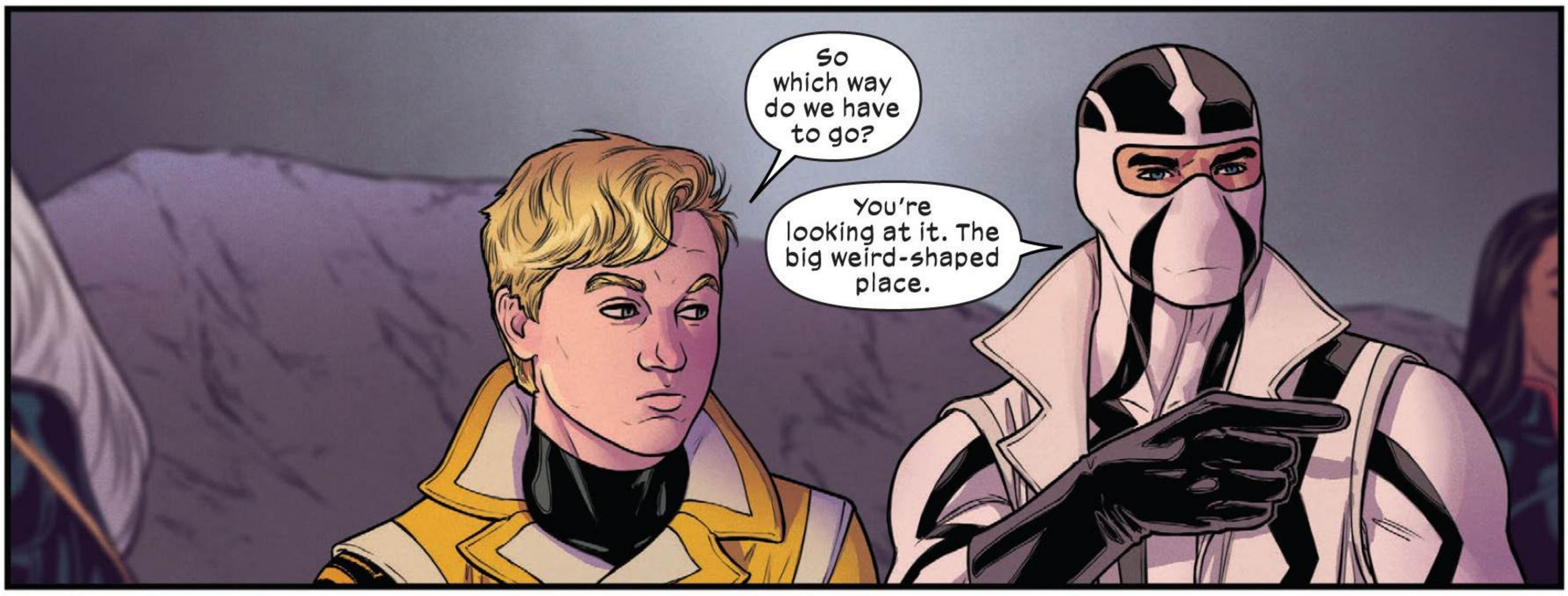

I spent ten years on doctorate degrees and advanced studies only to get tricked into working at A.I.M. by shiny toys and a mail-order bride...
Which would have been fine if I hadn't been drafted into a suicidal science team built to hack the temporal bubble of an artificial world...

CLINK
So, uh, pay me to betray my organization--not die--and disappear with a ton of cash?

Yes. Thank you, sir.
Sign. Me. Up.

Okay... everyone take a good look.
Welcome to *the World.*

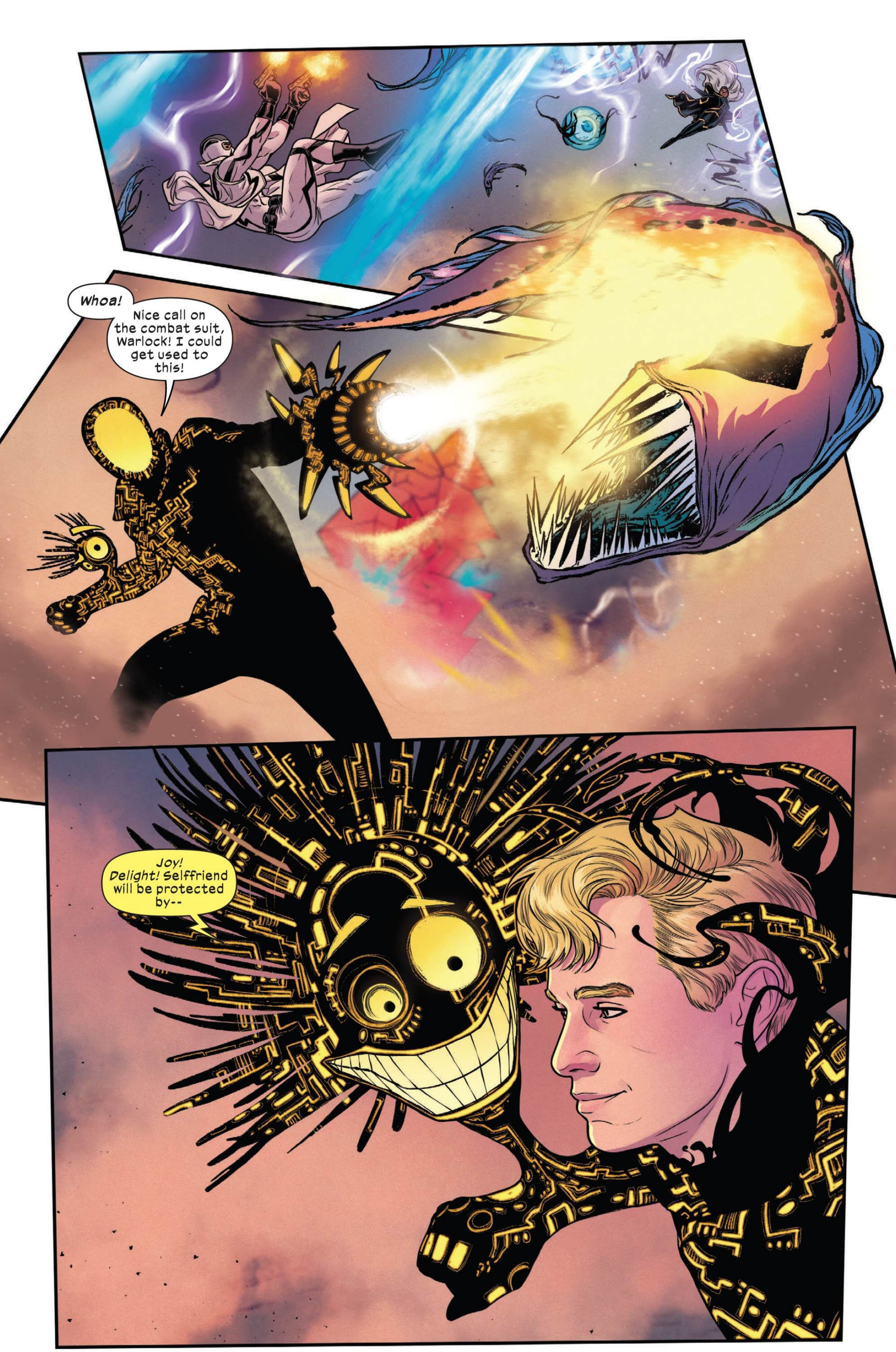

Huh. It appears as if there's some kind of giant battle going on.
I don't know what they're fighting about--or fighting over--but we're pretty lucky if you ask me.
Seems like the perfect distraction.


So which way do we have to go?
You're looking at it. The big weird-shaped place.

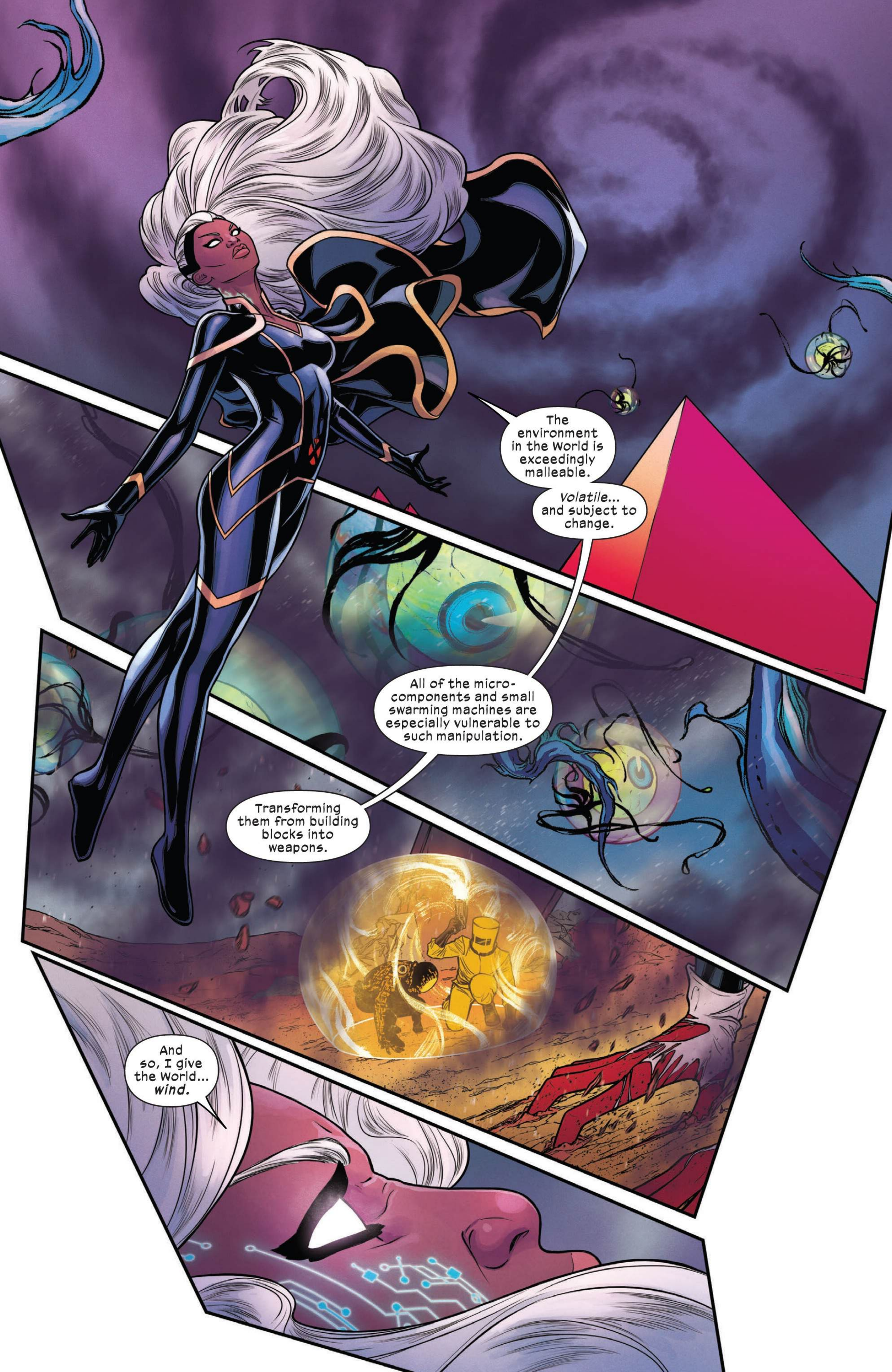
All right ...so, not so lucky.
Fantastic.

It'll be fine, Douglas...

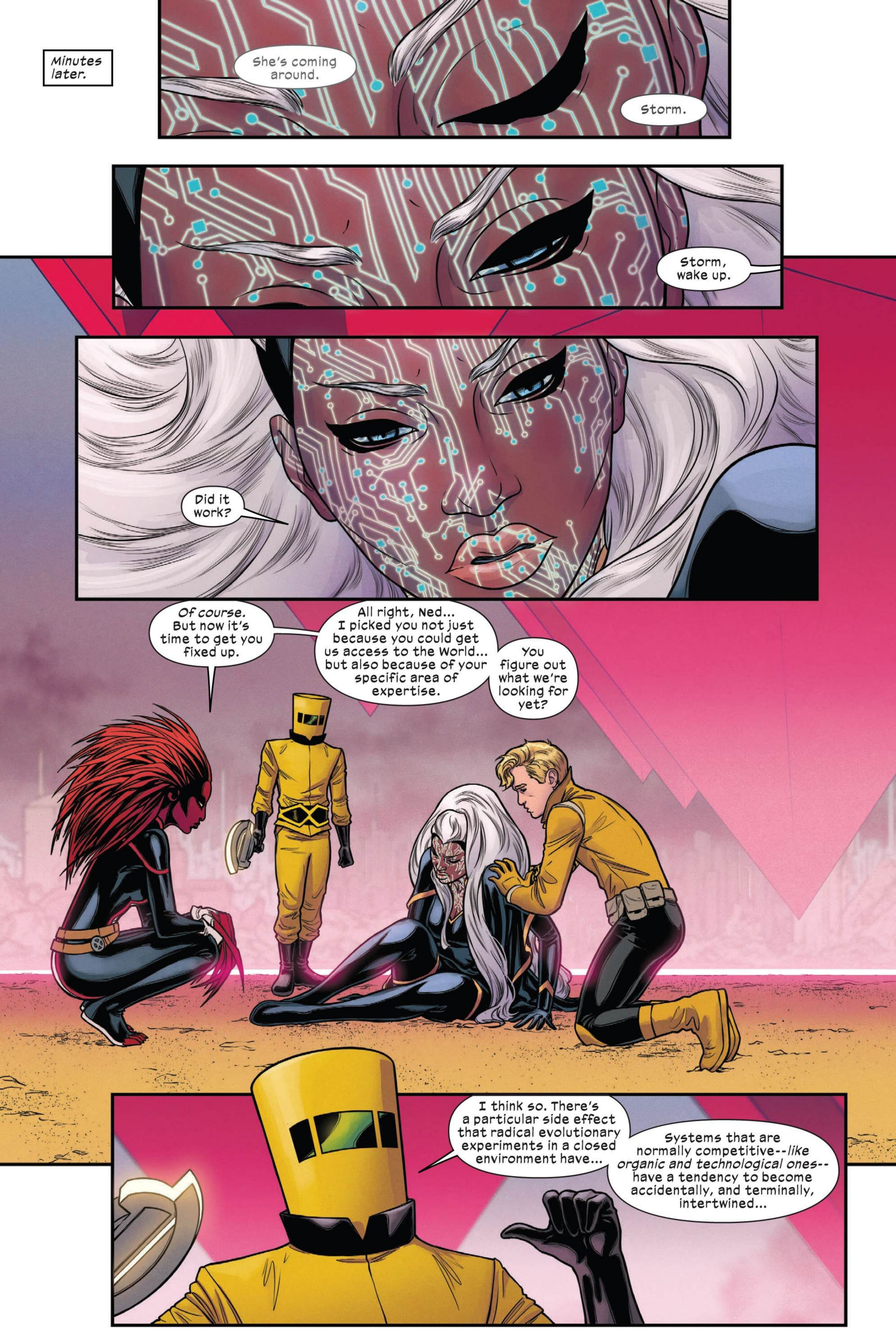
Just follow my lead.


Whoa!
Nice call on the combat suit, Warlock! I could get used to this!
Joy! Delight! Selffriend will be protected by--

TTKKKKK
Ugggffff!
TTKKKKKK--
ZZZZZZZ
See? That's what happens when you go after the mutant version of Bambi.
So don't do that.
Uh, hey! HEY! Where are you going?
I'm in a bit of a spot here.
I could use a...little... help...
Or maybe not.


The environment in the World is exceedingly malleable.
*Volatile*... and subject to change.
All of the micro-components and small swarming machines are especially vulnerable to such manipulation.
Transforming them from building blocks into weapons.
And so, I give the World... *wind.*

Wind to wreak havoc! Wind to...
...to...
...to...
uhhhhhhh...


Minutes later.
She's coming around.
Storm.
Storm, wake up.
Did it work?
Of course. But now it's time to get you fixed up.
All right, Ned... I picked you not just because you could get us access to the World... but also because of your specific area of expertise.
You figure out what we're looking for yet?
I think so. There's a particular side effect that radical evolutionary experiments in a closed environment have...
Systems that are normally competitive--*like organic and technological ones*--have a tendency to become accidentally, and terminally, intertwined...

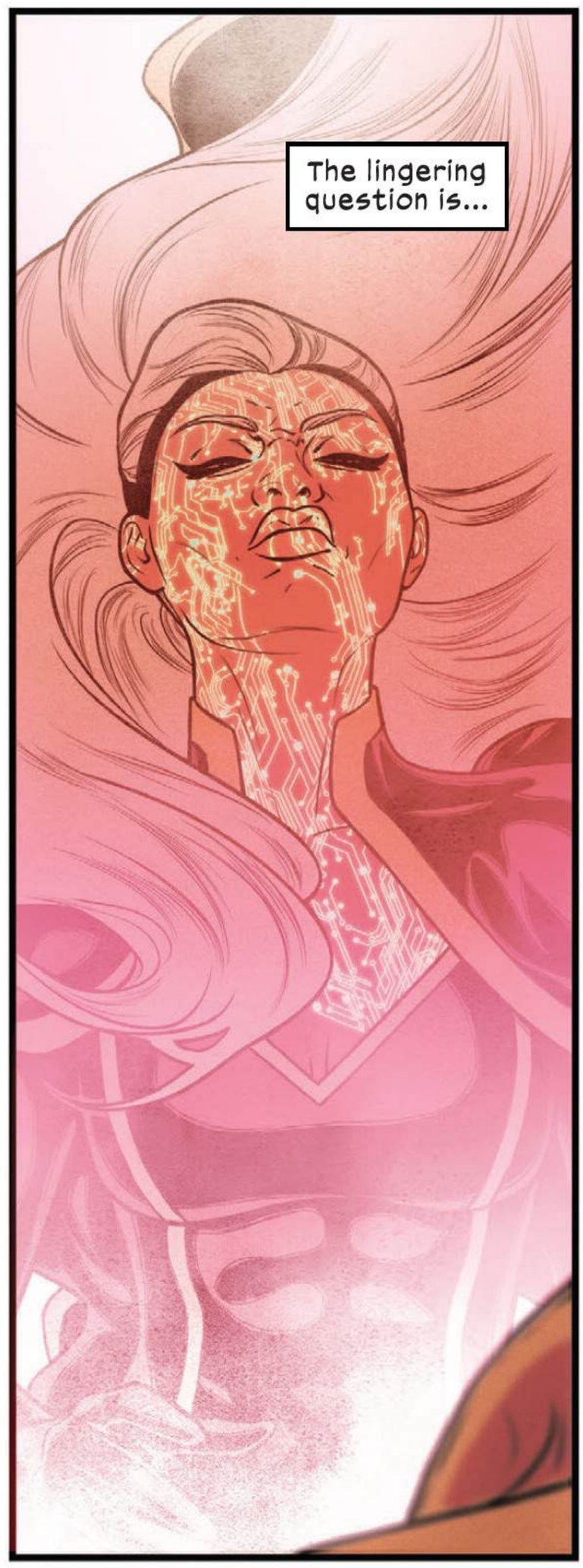
"So we built a machine to pull them apart.
"It's in there. In the same direction Fantomex ran off to.
"Who knows..."

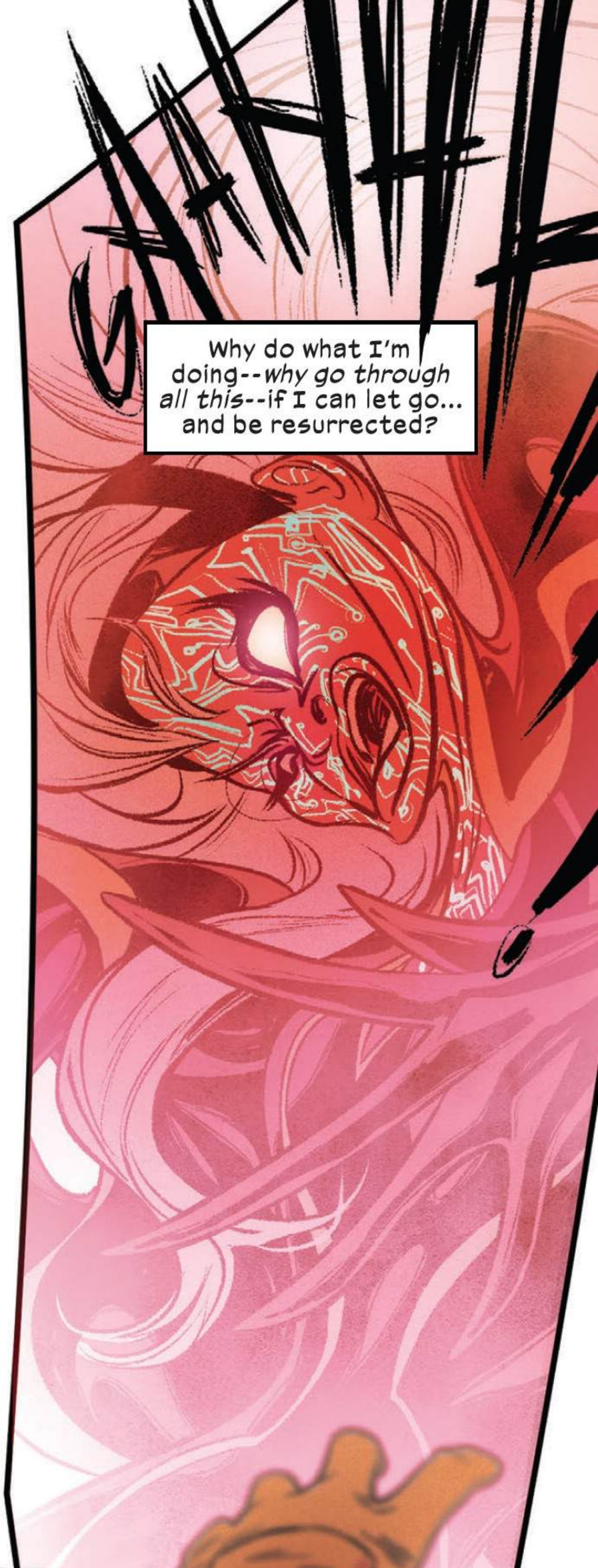
...we might even run into...
Him.

Uh, this isn't as bad as it looks.

I promise.
That's the machine we need. You need to climb inside the unity field, while I man the controls.
When I activate the machine...it will begin to decouple you from the virus.
Hopefully you're not past its ability to ***separate them.***

Powering on.


The lingering question is...


Why do what I'm doing--*why go through all this*--if I can let go... and be resurrected?

Hey! Looks like backup has arrived!
Why struggle? *Why fight?*

Why not just surrender to the inevitable--wash my hands of it--and start anew?
After all, what's one life when you have an endless number of them?
Where's the value?
How can you even define what a "good life" is?
Argggh!
And...
And...
I'll tell you...

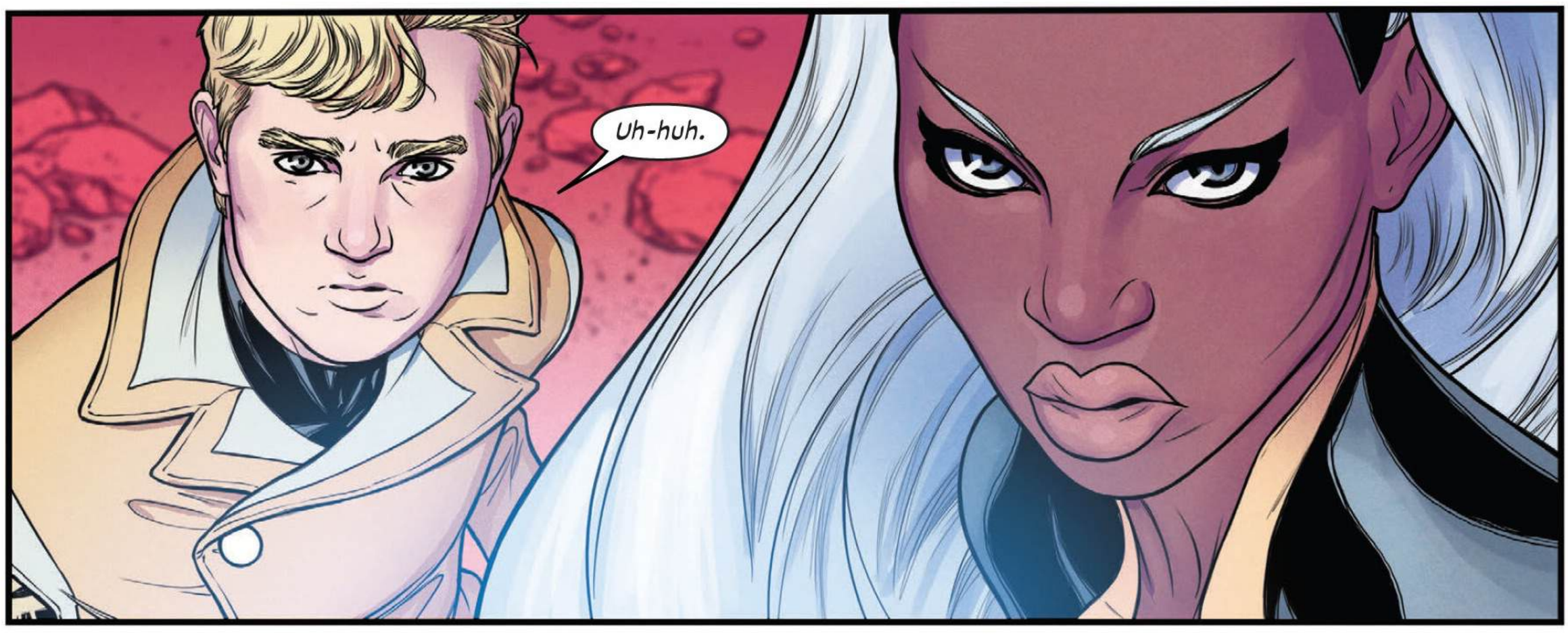
The true measure of *life* is in the *living.*
It isn't a series of *do-overs* and *restarts*... It's fighting for what you have, what you believe in...
It's fighting for *who you are.*

I am a mutant.
NO!
I am a goddess.
And I want to live.
I'm better, see?
Today I've had my fill of machines. I'm done now...

That's better...
I'm back to full strength.
I hope we didn't put you out too much, Douglas. Are you all right?
Oh, you know me...amazing at fieldwork.
I'm shocked they don't send me on more of these things. I'm a natural.
Monet...

Thank you for figuring all this out.
I am in your debt.
Don't be ridiculous... it was--
Huh?
That doesn't look right...
What's happening with the containment field?

It's all right. I was expecting this.
I came *prepared.*
The problem with how this machine works is, in this case, you're leaving behind a pure technological construct that's been exposed to the same temporal forces that Storm was...
There's no telling what it could become if it expanded at will.
*This* is a *containment system.*
It should prevent any potential intelligence from reaching evolutionary critical mass.


*Uh-huh.*

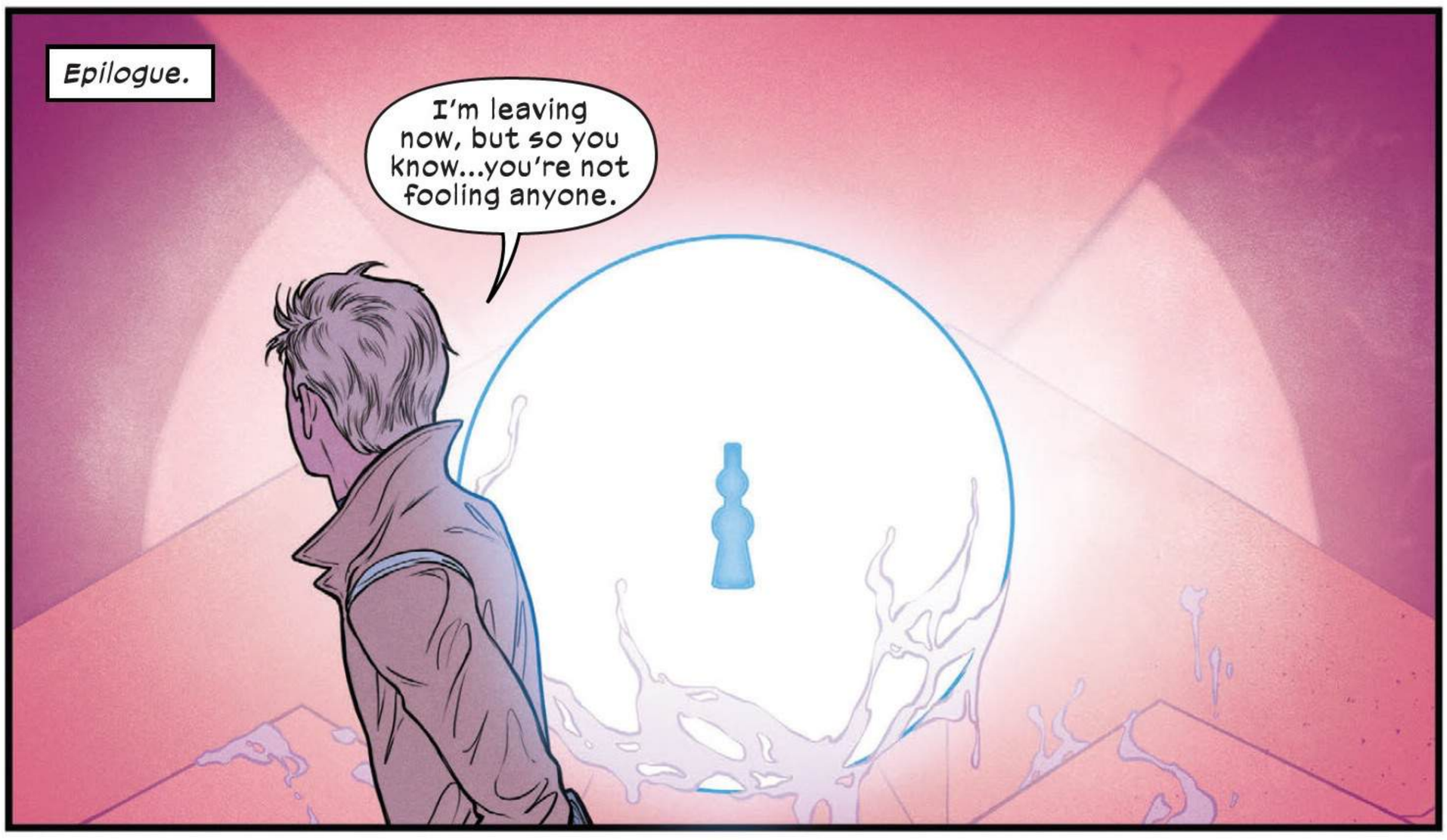
Dare I ask if you're finally ready to leave?
You should know by now... I'm never going to leave.

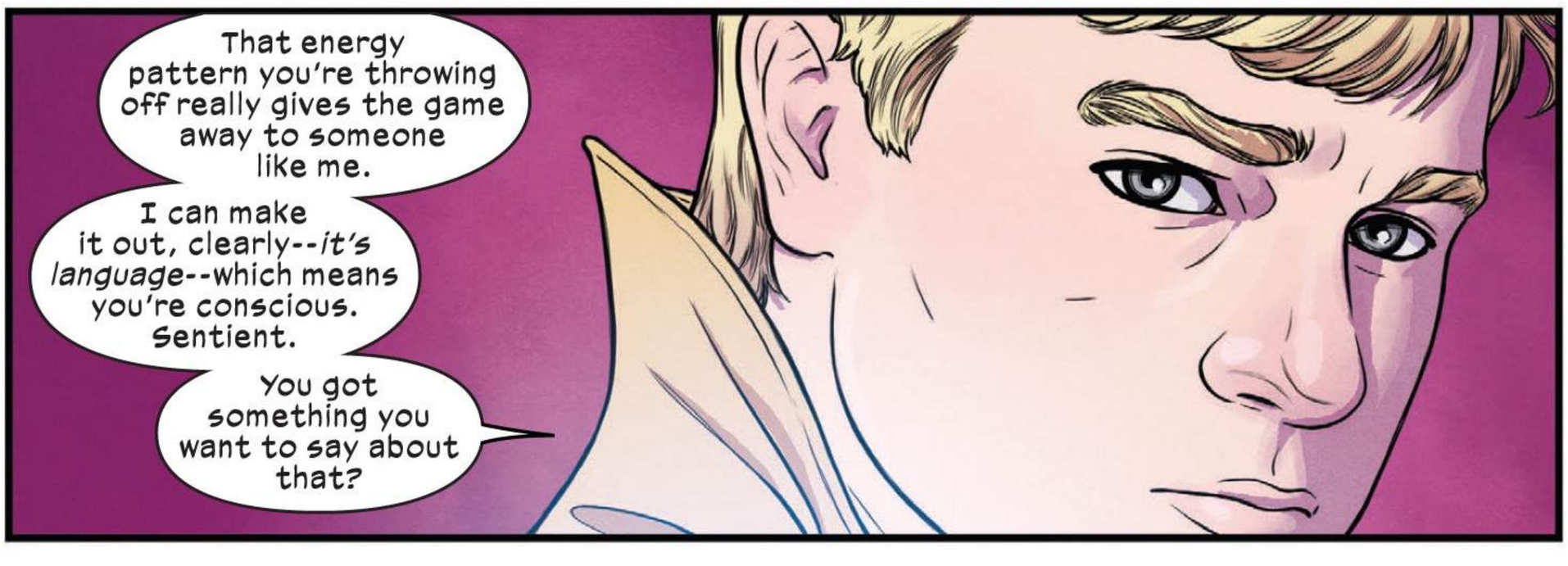
...
Then I guess I'm going to stay too.

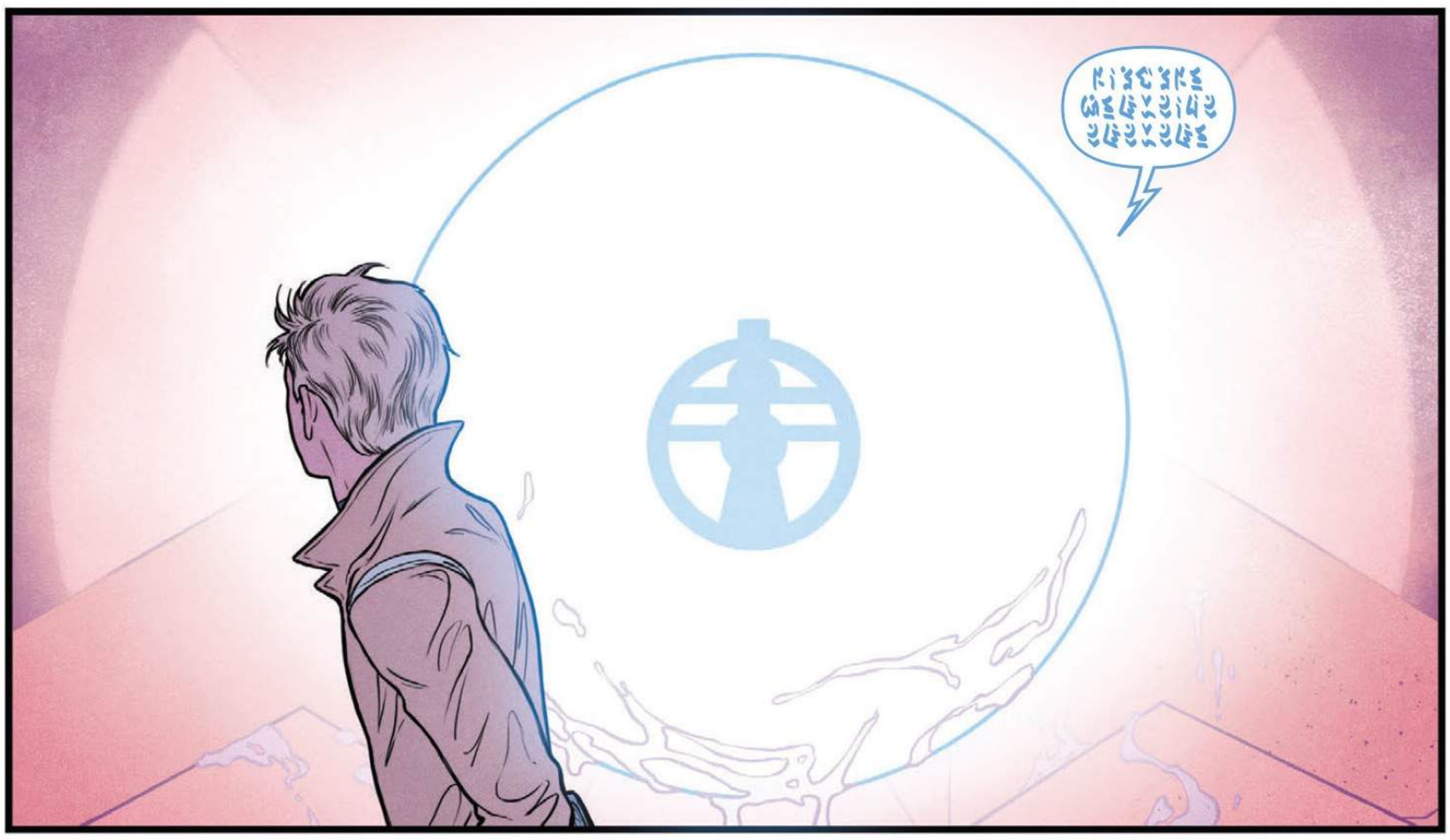
What does that mean, I have no idea... but I guess we'll figure out together.
Stay put. I'll be right back after I show these guys the way back out...
...to the *real world.*

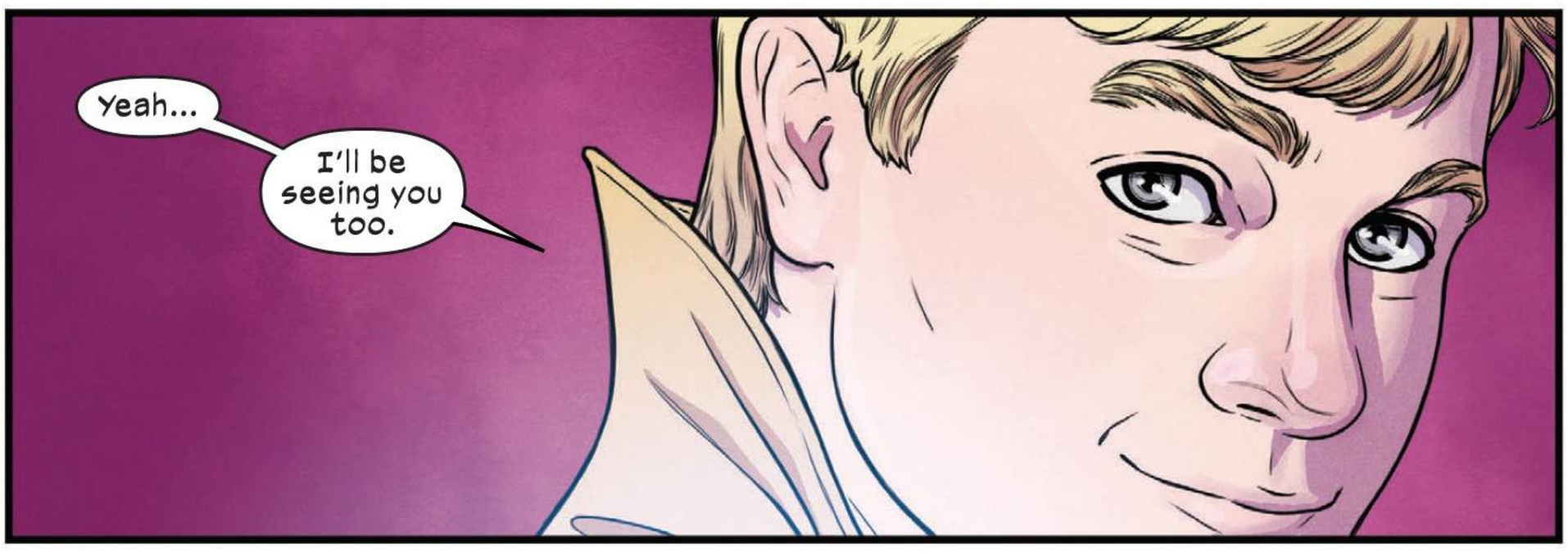
Are you ready to leave, Ned?
If I remember correctly, there's a whole lot of money waiting for you.

I don't need it. You keep it. Spend it, *whatever*...just don't give it to *charity*.
So you're staying too?
Are you kidding?
Look at this place. It's amazing...
It's like an evil scientist's dream lab...except it's not a lab, it's an entire world. What's not to love?
With talk like that, I should take you with us--whether you like it or not.
But you helped save me...
So instead--thank you...*very much*.
Do not try to get into *too much* trouble.


Epilogue.
I'm leaving now, but so you know...you're not fooling anyone.

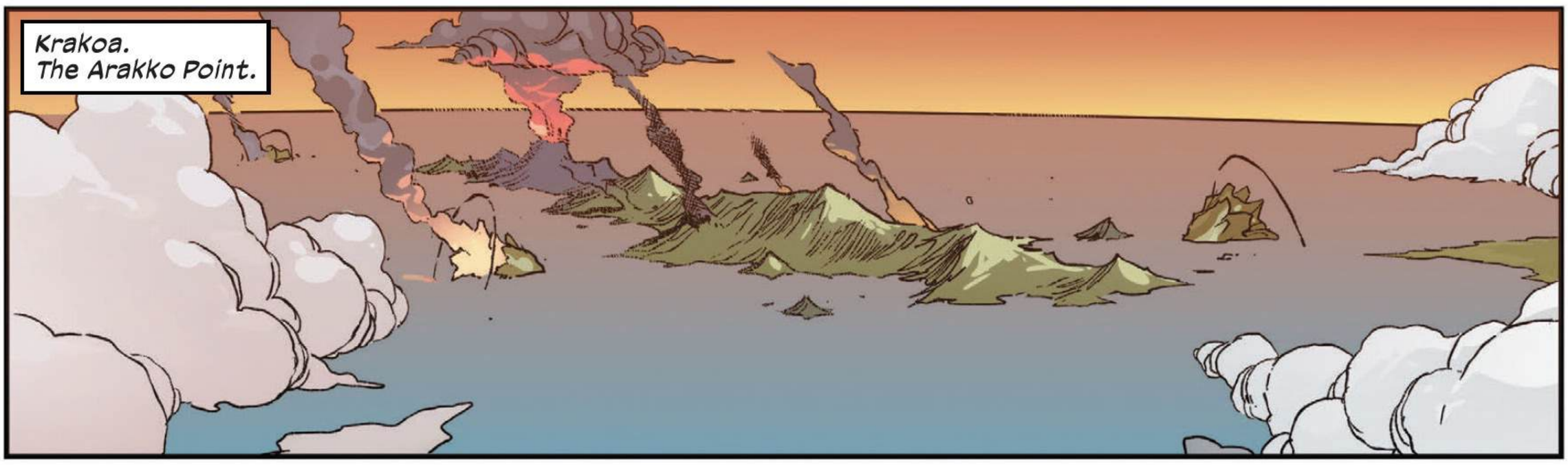

That energy pattern you're throwing off really gives the game away to someone like me.
I can make it out, clearly--*it's language*--which means you're conscious. Sentient.
You got something you want to say about that?



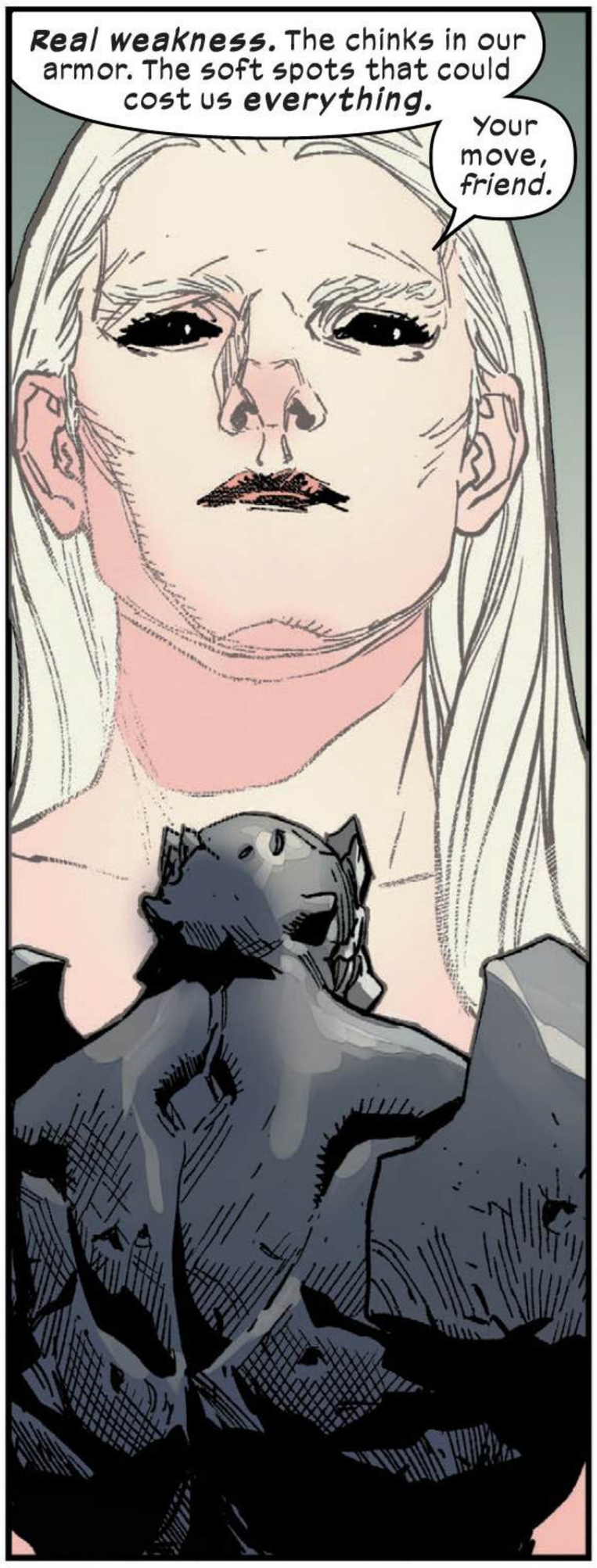

Yeah...
I'll be seeing you too.

# Amenth

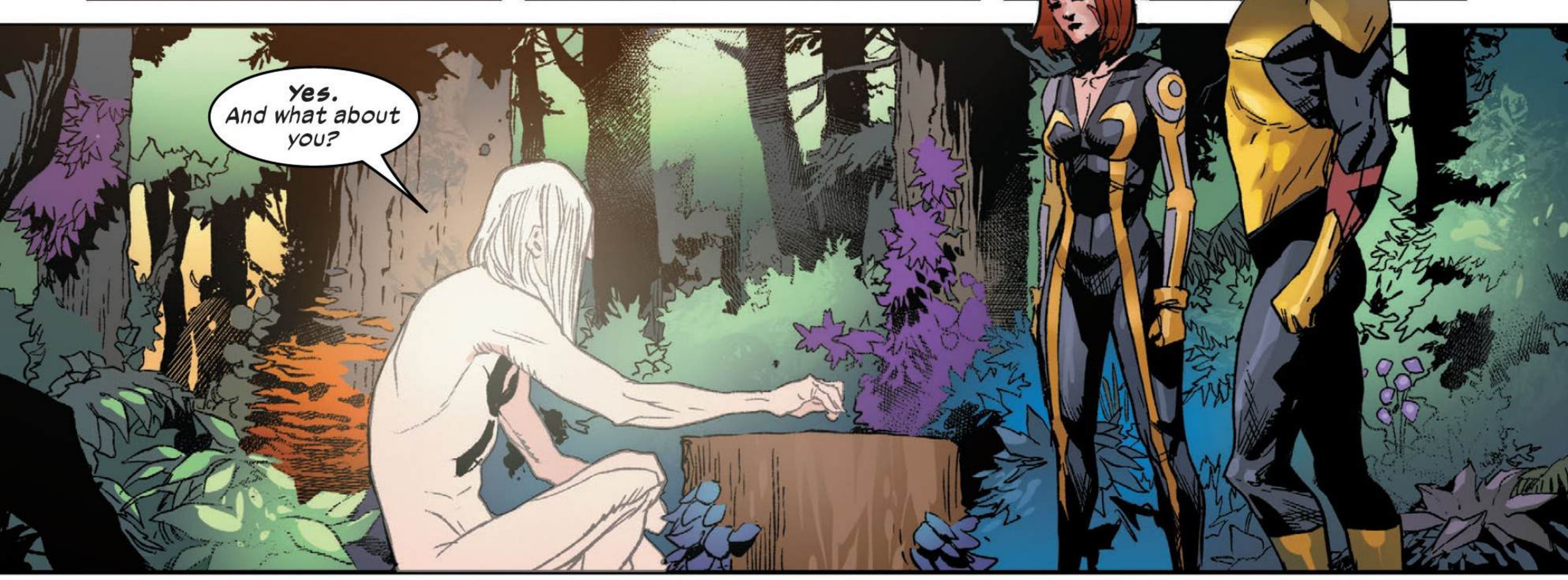
# 17


Krakoa.
The Arakko Point.

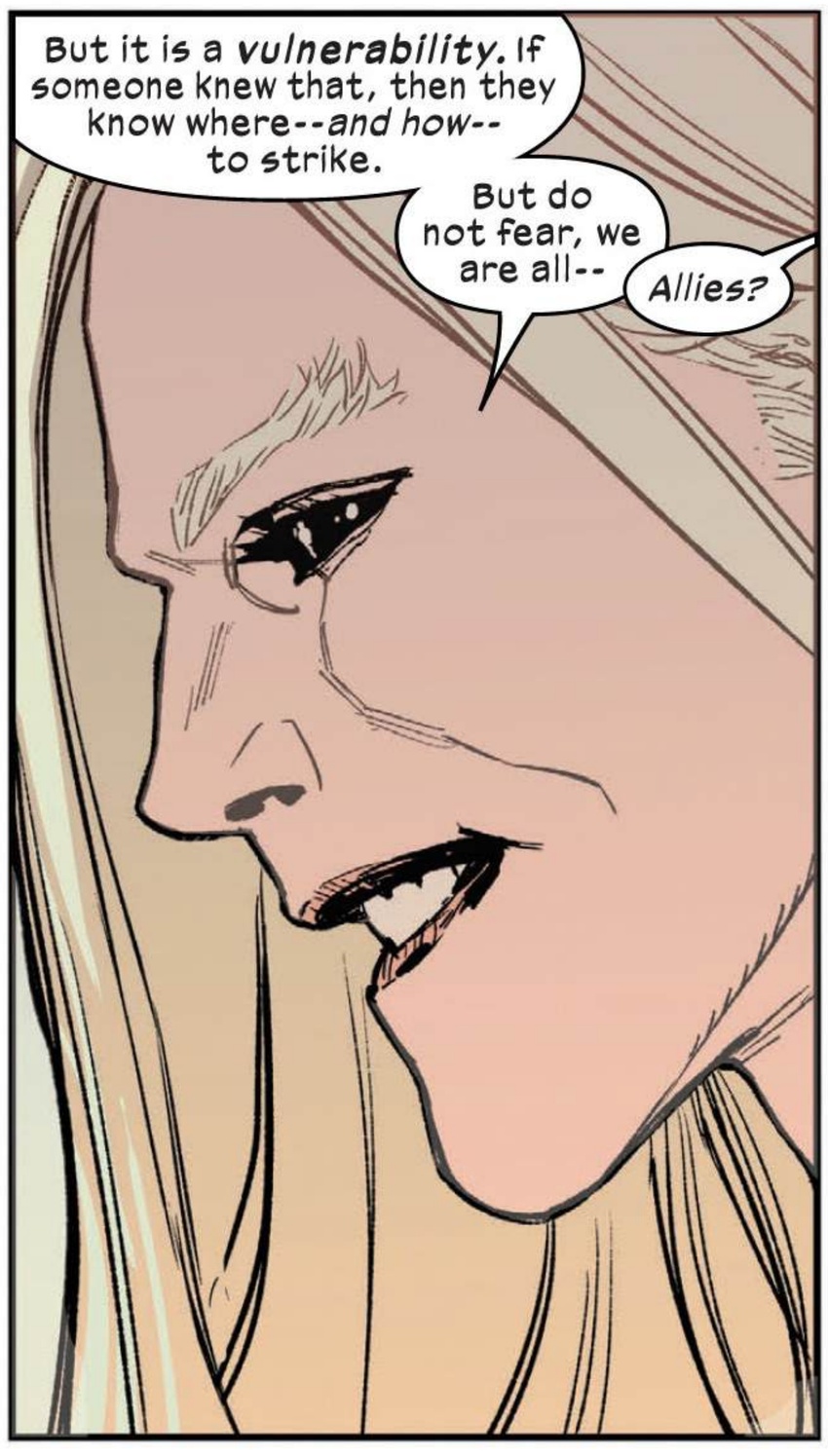
We've learned so much about one another. What we *love*, what we *hate*... the things we *believe*...
All the fear in our hearts and doubt in our minds... but now we come to the sharp end of it.


***Real weakness.*** The chinks in our armor. The soft spots that could cost us ***everything.***
Your move, *friend.*

*Yeah, yeah...I'm moving.*
Now, let me take a good look at you...
*Ah!* I ***see*** you.
You're invulnerable. That's your mutant power, that you cannot be hurt...
Except your eyes, Summoner.
That's your weakness.

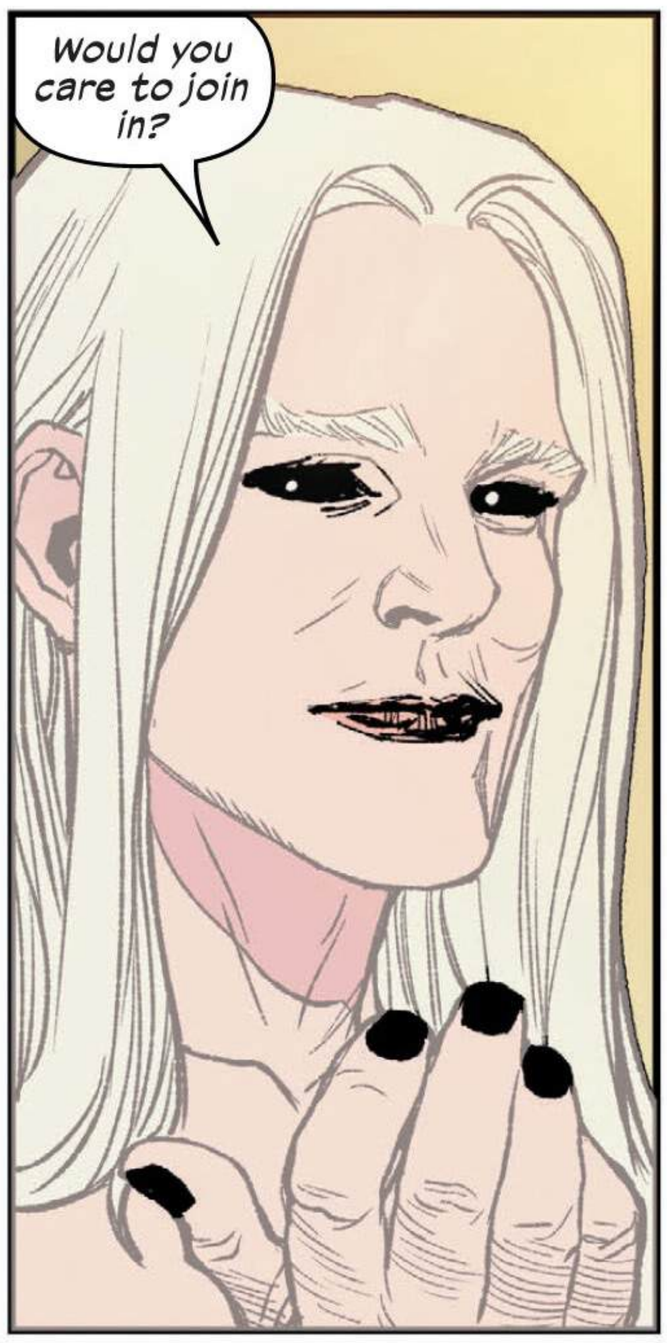

***Yes.*** *And what about you?*

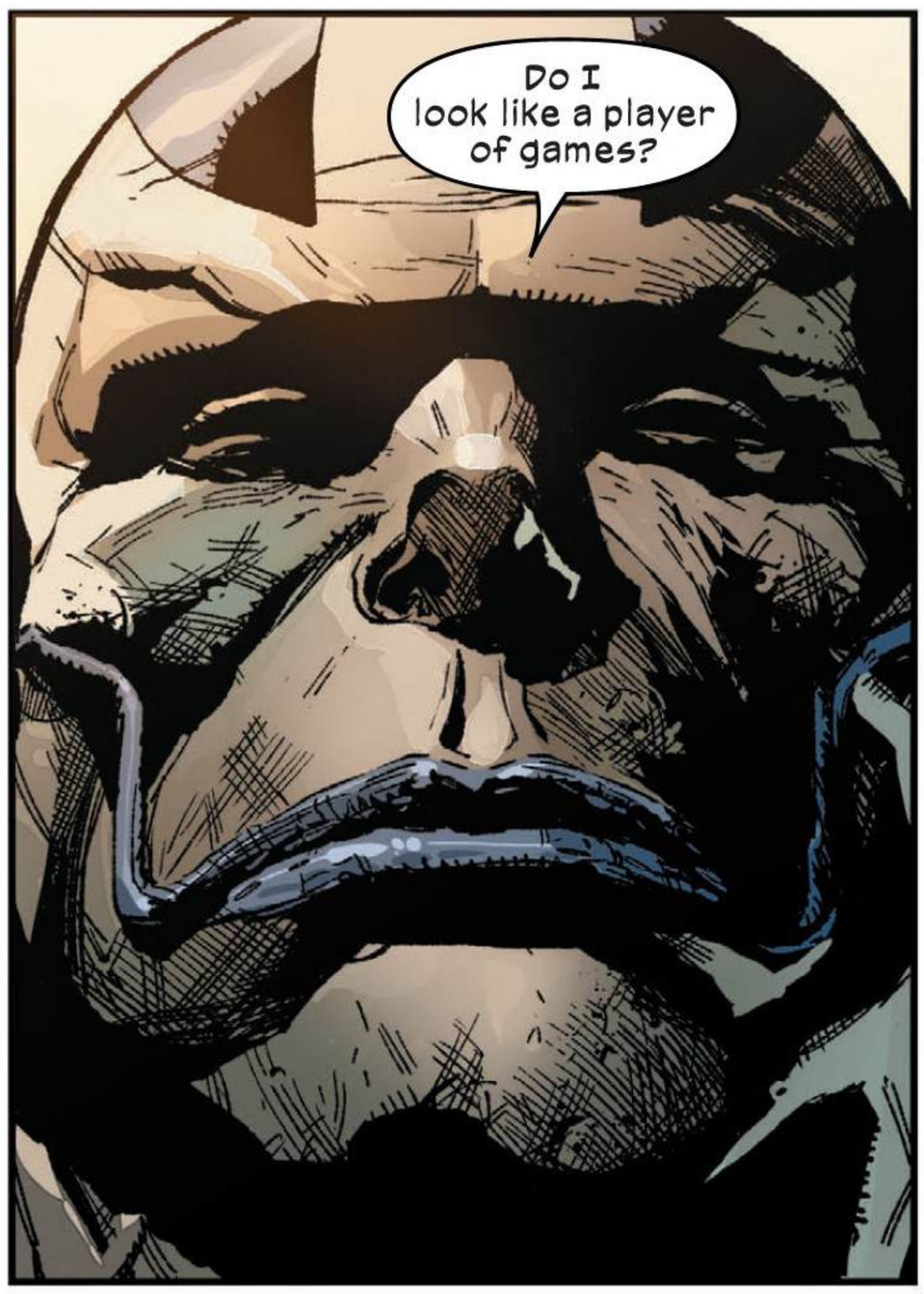
This, my friend, is fascinating. Your external form is simply a rocky shell--*armor of stone*--that protects and hides the energy self that is the ***real you.***



If so, then good.
For I have come seeking knowledge.

Hello, Grandfather.
I was showing my friends here an Arakkii game...

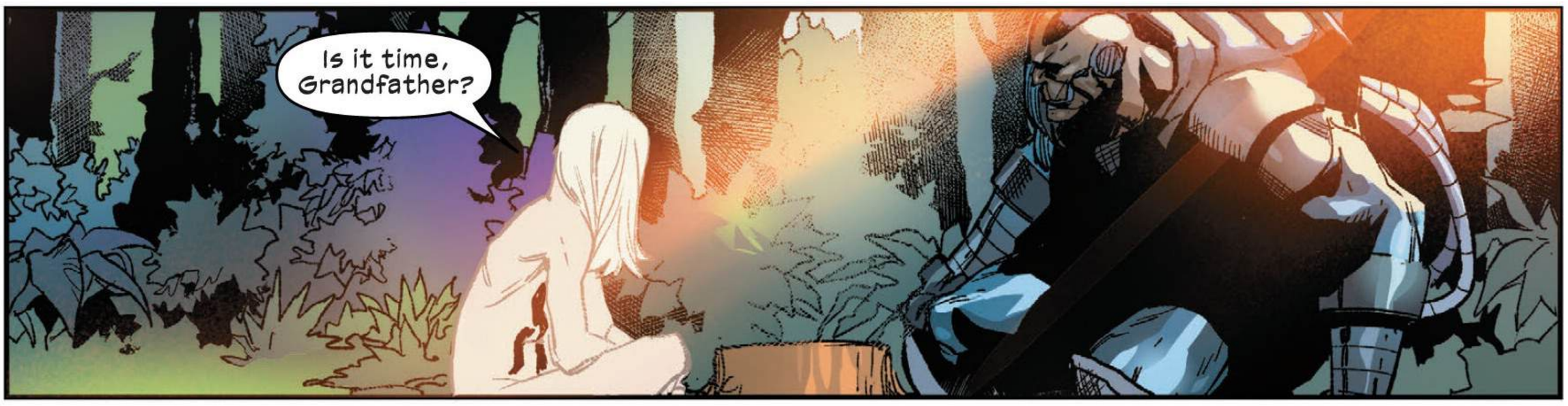

Would you care to join in?

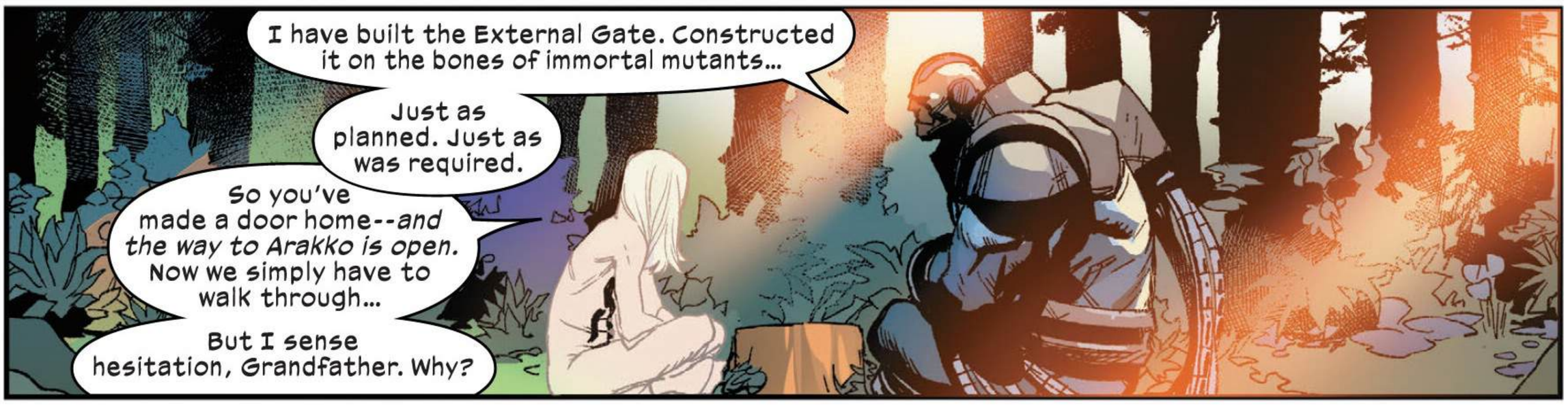

Do I look like a player of games?

Yes.
Very much so.

Leave us, children.

See ya later.
Soon will not be soon enough, friend.


Is it time, Grandfather?


I have built the External Gate. Constructed it on the bones of immortal mutants...
Just as planned. Just as was required.
So you've made a door home--*and the way to Arakko is open.* Now we simply have to walk through...
But I sense hesitation, Grandfather. Why?

When I saw you--*and that you were of my lineage*--I put my faith in that.
But before I send the whole of Krakoa across Otherworld and into the unknown, there are things I have to know that you have not yet told me.

You want to know what really happened?
How we fought? How we fell?
Yes.
Very well...

[the___one]
[the__land]

A MUTANT'S HISTORY OF

# ARAKKO

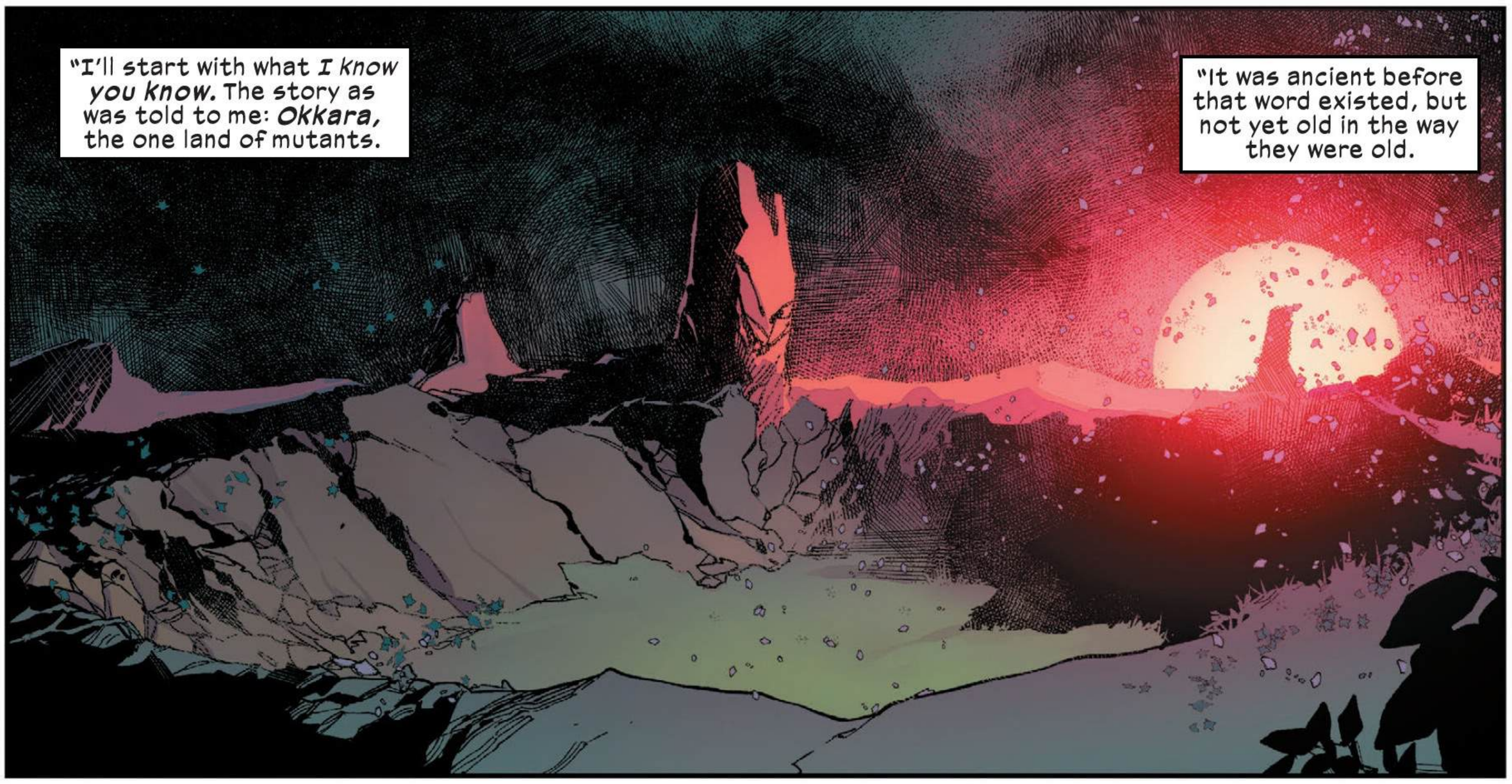
+

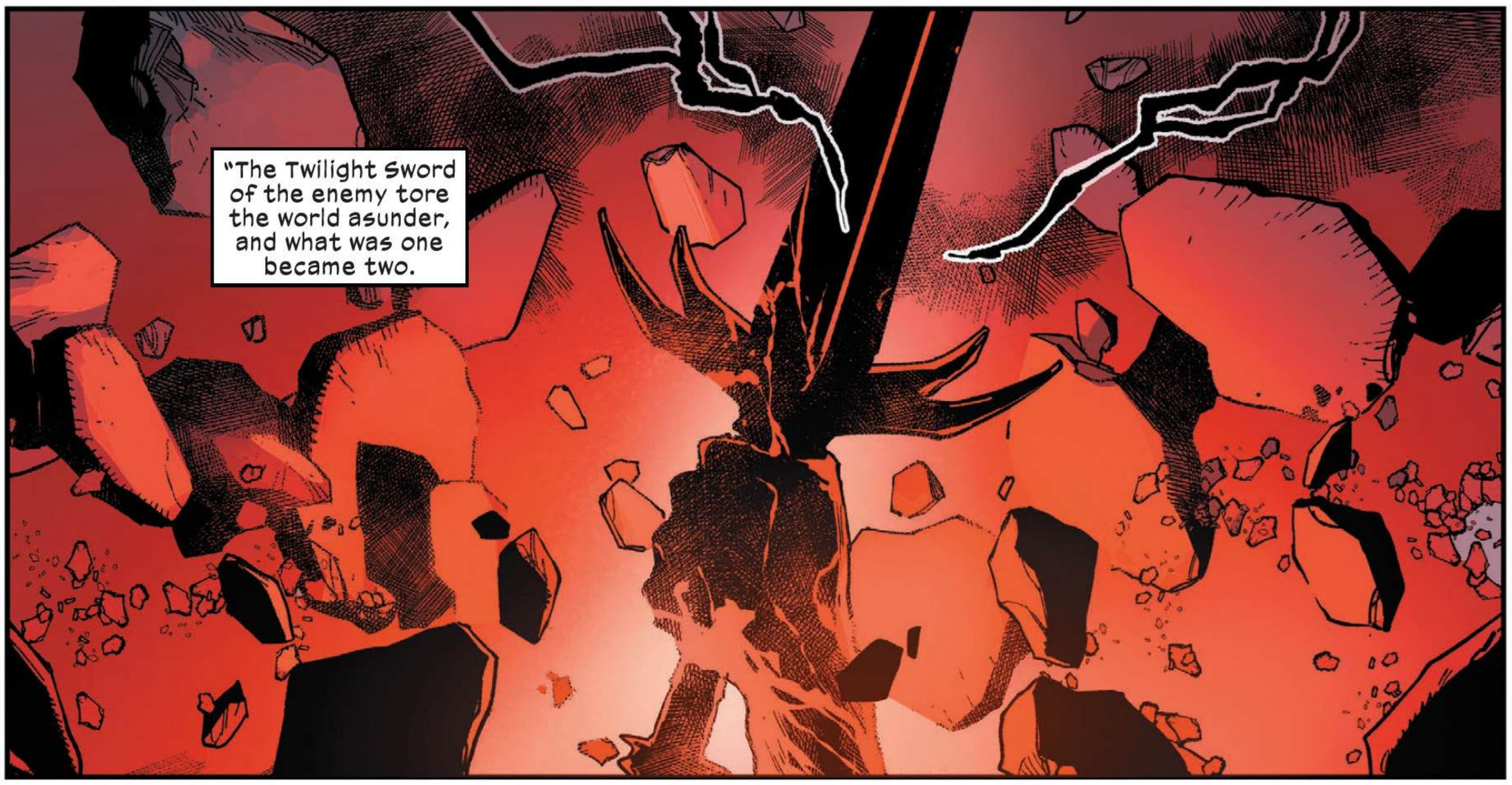
AND THE FALLEN WORLD OF AMENTH

[x_Okkara_]
[x_Arakko_]

[.....X]
[.....X]

[Krakoa]
[We_eps]

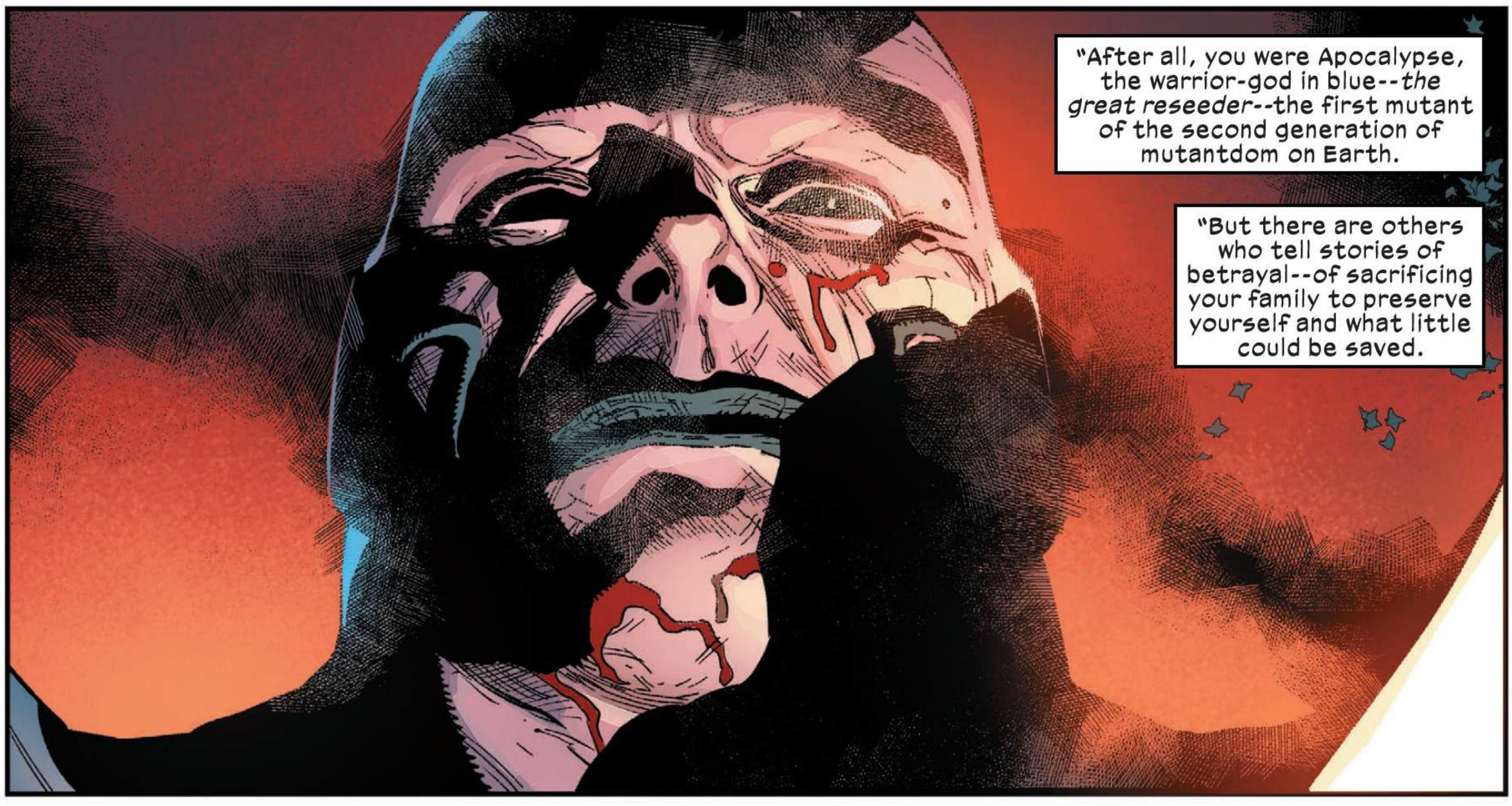

"I'll start with what *I know you know.* The story as was told to me: ***Okkara,*** the one land of mutants.
"It was ancient before that word existed, but not yet old in the way they were old.

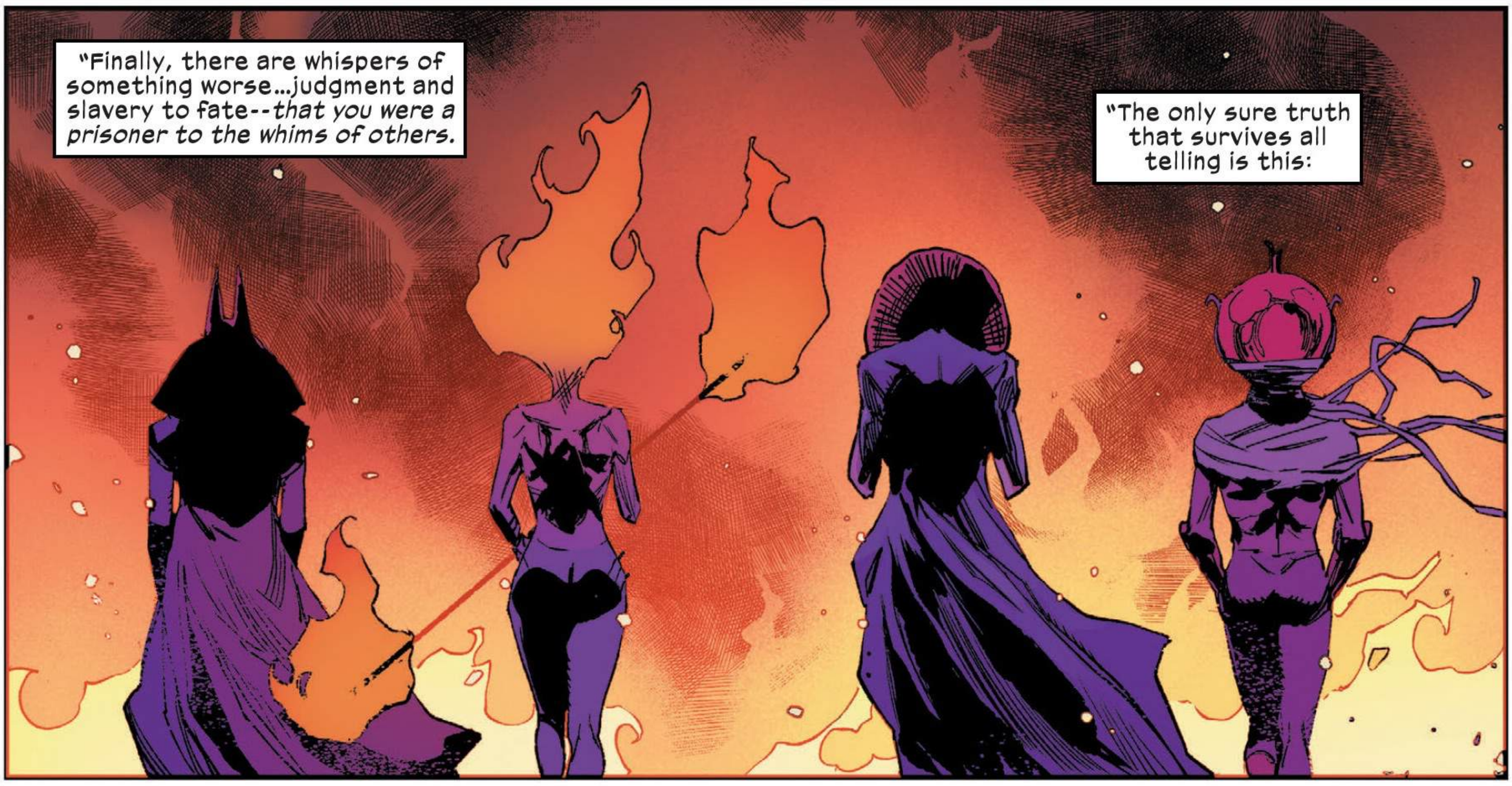

"The Twilight Sword of the enemy tore the world asunder, and what was one became two.

"And from the chasm between them--*from that* ***dark world***--the enemy poured into this world.

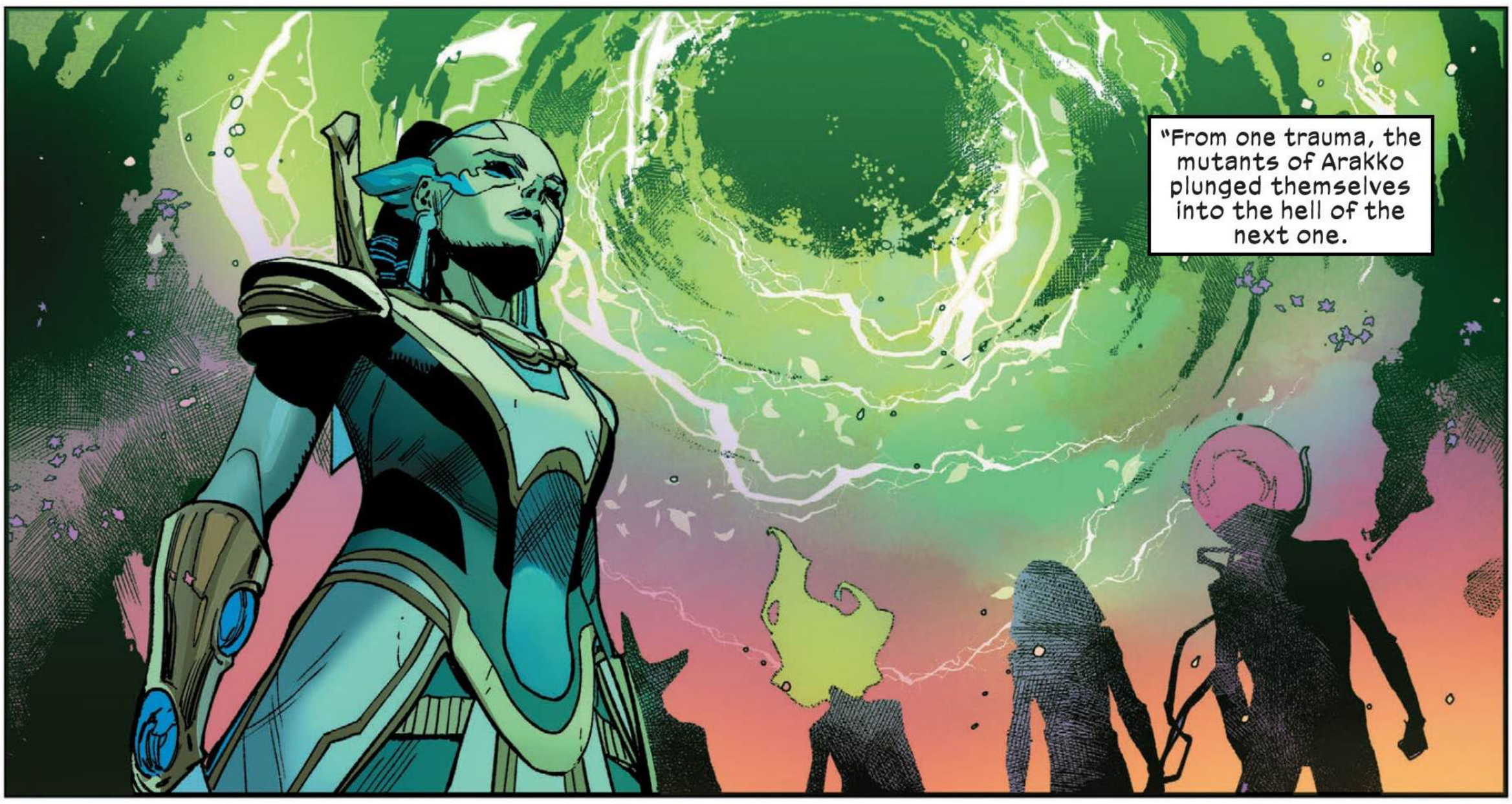
"Until, at great cost, the army of the enemy--*along with Arakko itself*--were pushed back through, and the chasm was sealed shut.

"But like all stories old enough to grow in the telling, it sometimes becomes difficult to separate ***fact*** from ***fiction***...*or truth from lies.*
"Some say that you stayed behind to prevent that world from falling. To seal the breach and save what could be saved.

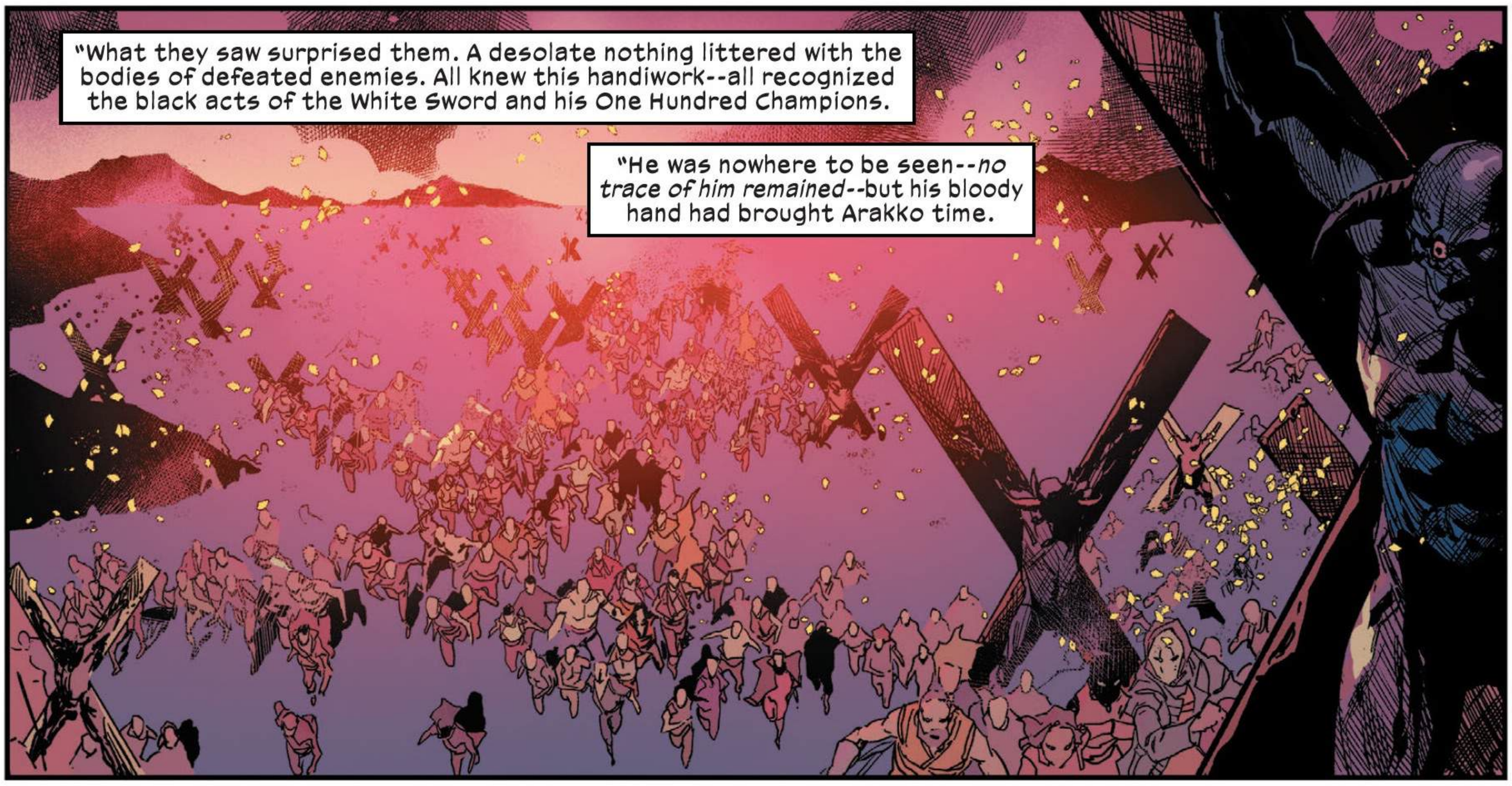

"After all, you were Apocalypse, the warrior-god in blue--*the great reseeder*--the first mutant of the second generation of mutantdom on Earth.
"But there are others who tell stories of betrayal--of sacrificing your family to preserve yourself and what little could be saved.

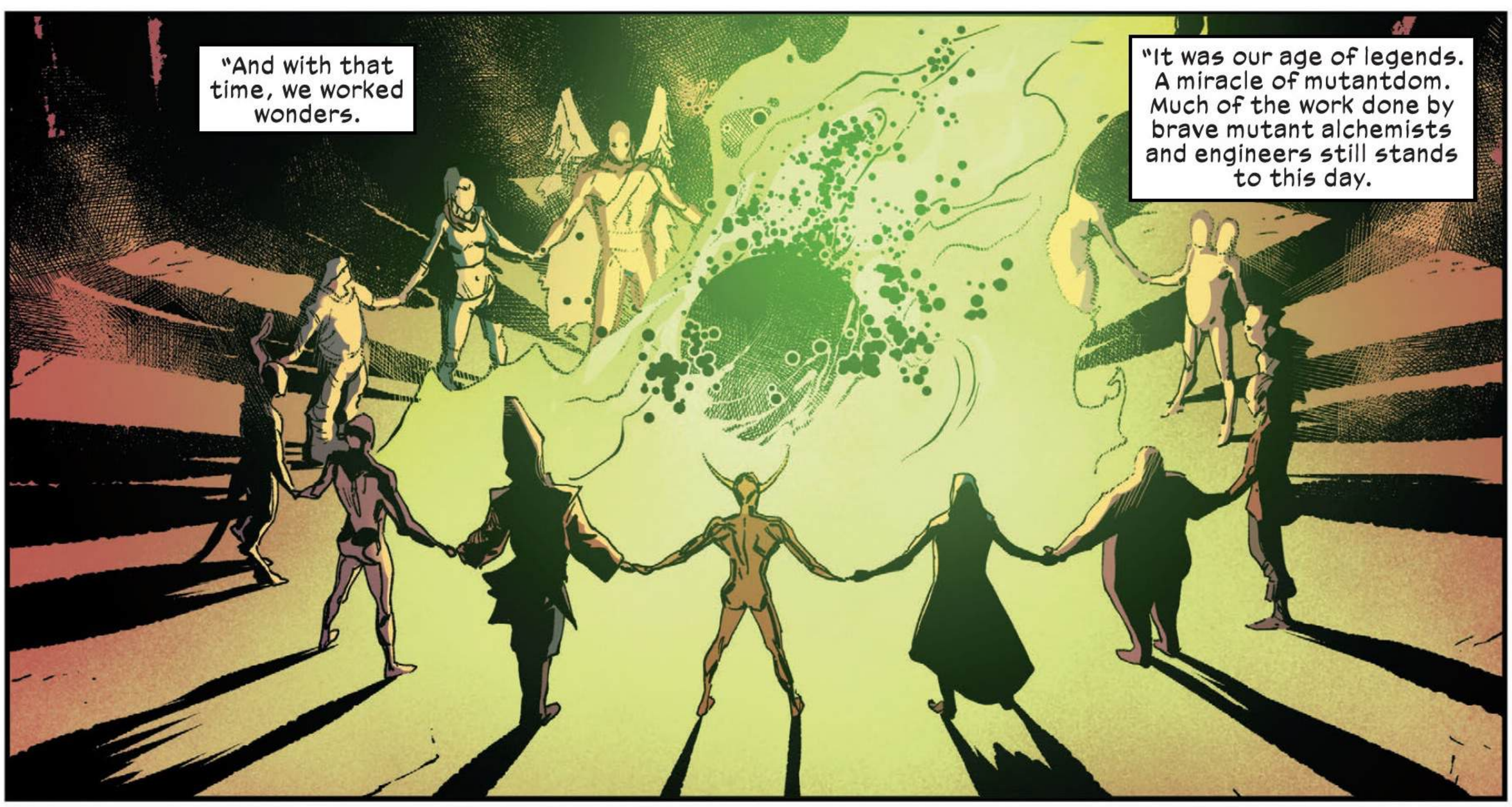

"Finally, there are whispers of something worse...judgment and slavery to fate--*that you were a prisoner to the whims of others.*
"The only sure truth that survives all telling is this:

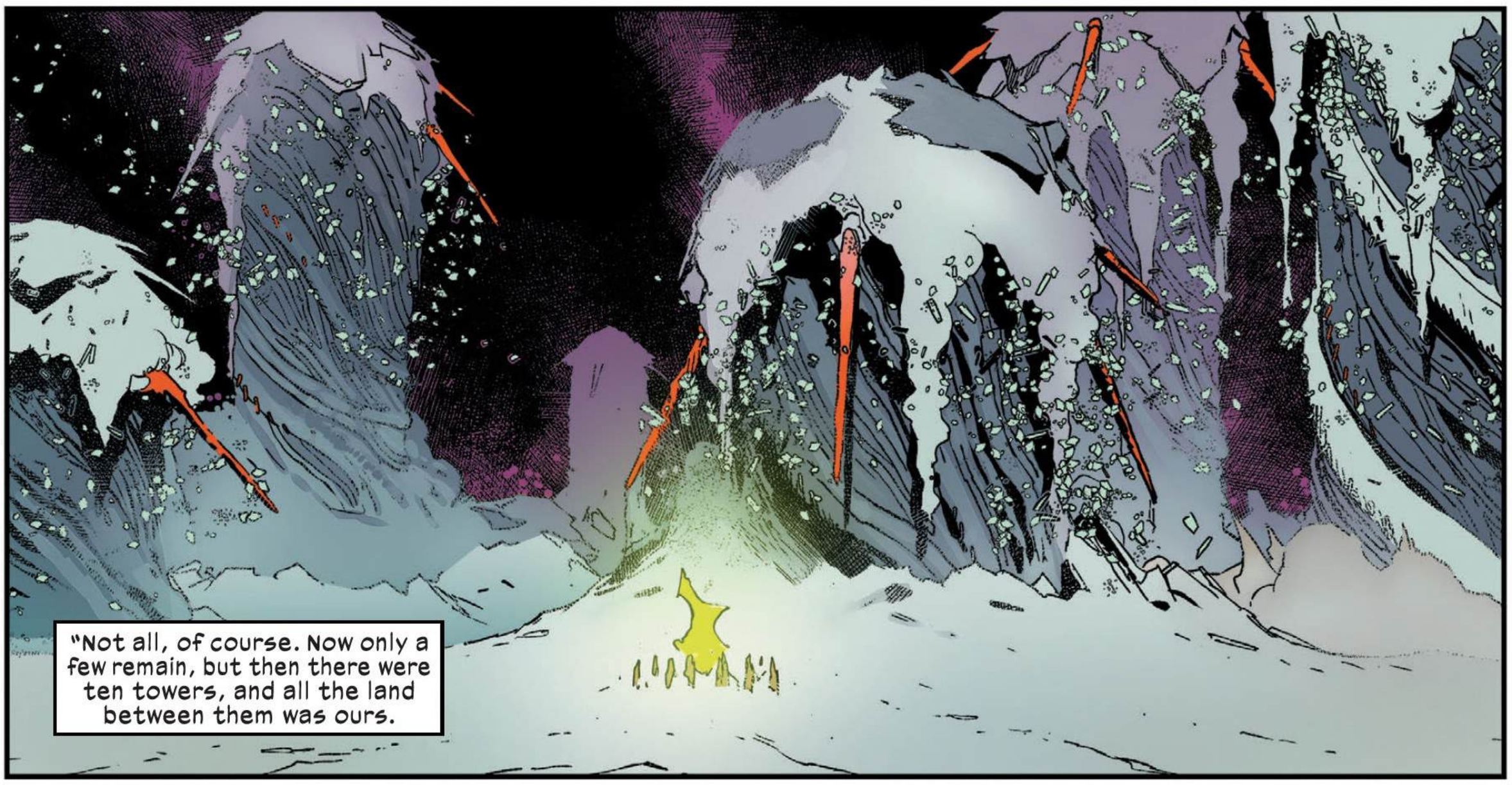
"What should never have been cleaved in two was separated forever...
"Husband from wife. Parent from child. Arakko from Krakoa.

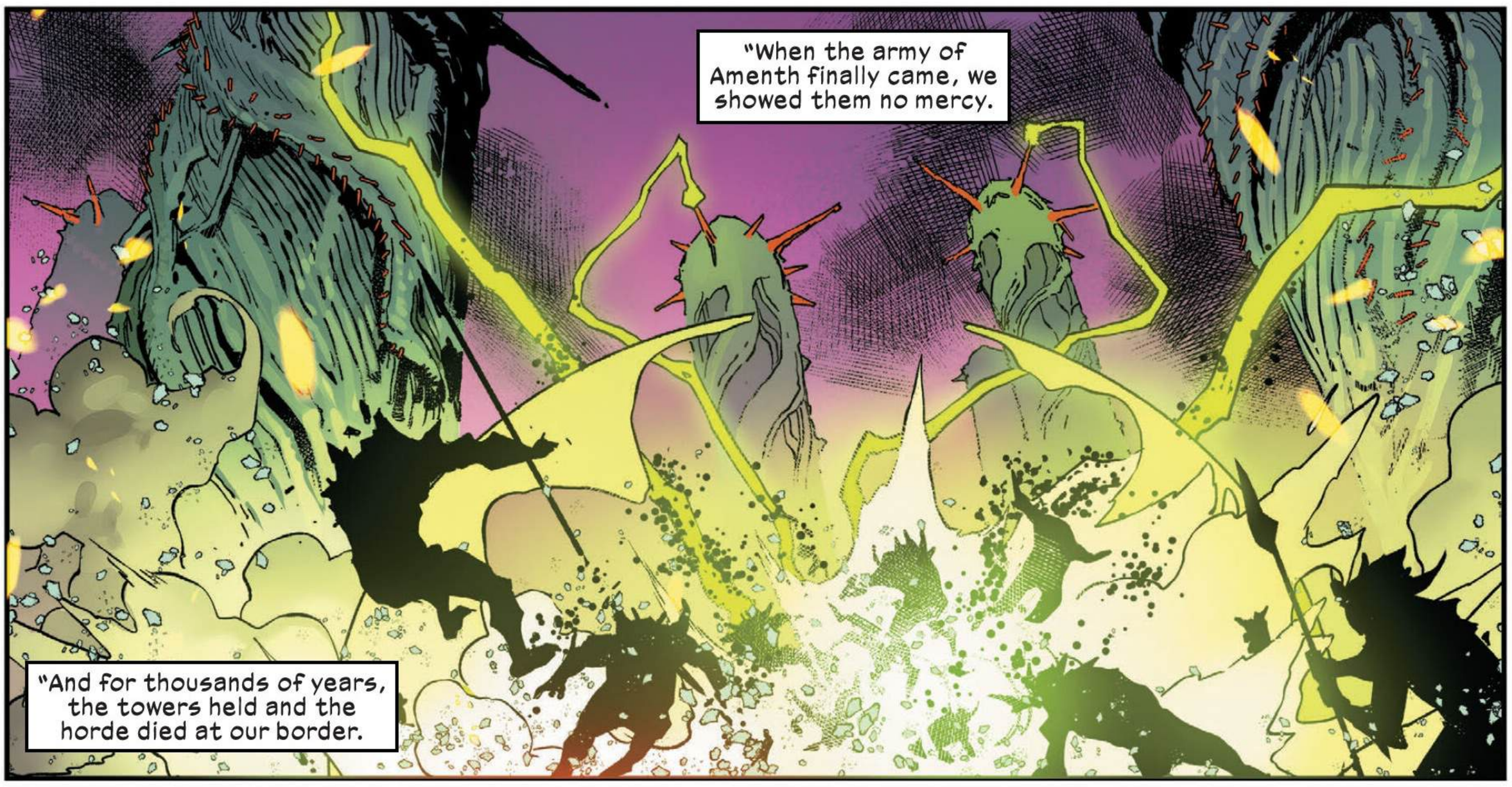

"From one trauma, the mutants of Arakko plunged themselves into the hell of the next one.

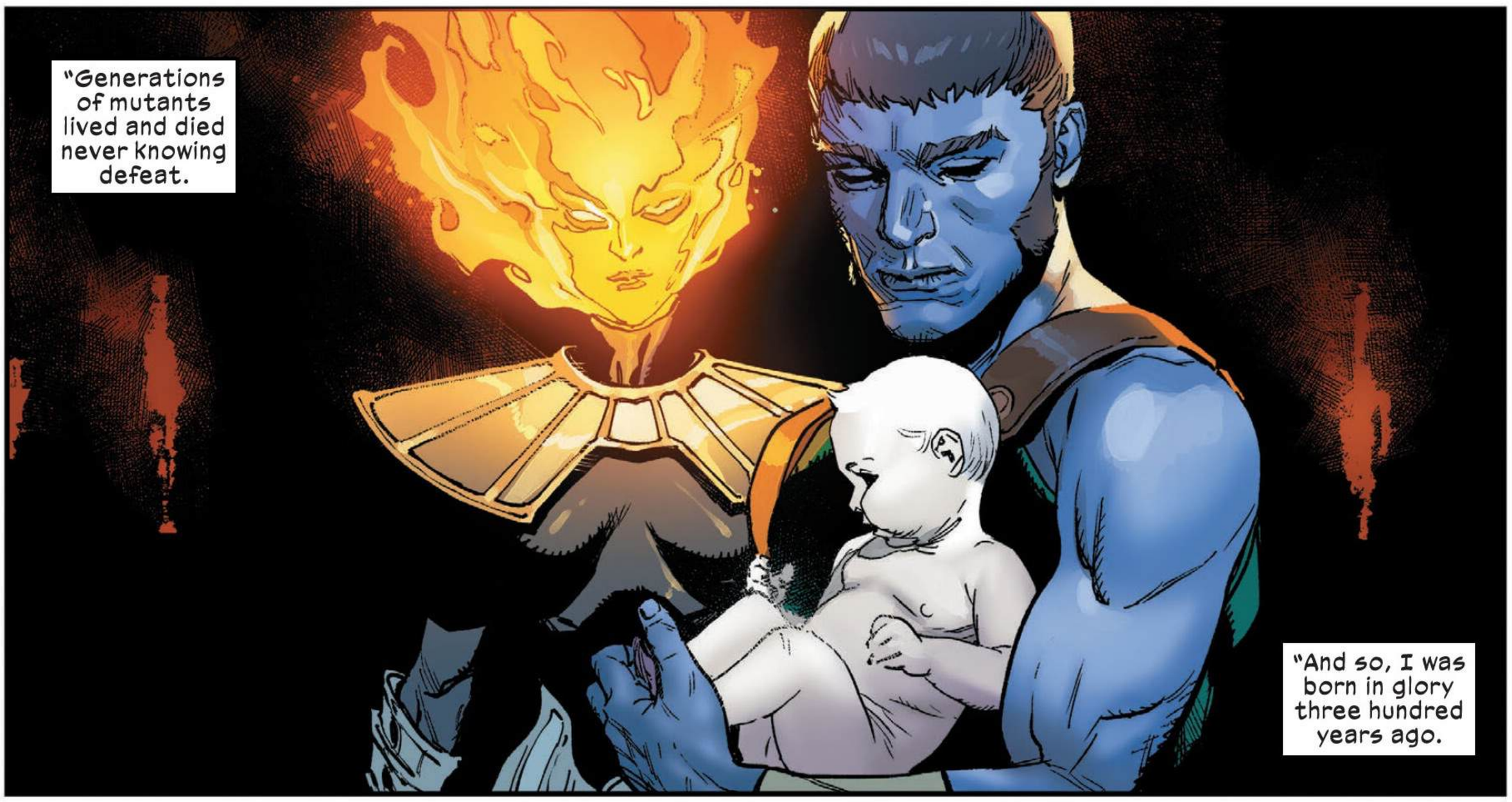
"What waited for them was not an army...
"No. For some it meant madness--for the rest it was the wasteland of a world called *Amenth.*
"A black world. A fallen world.


"What they saw surprised them. A desolate nothing littered with the bodies of defeated enemies. All knew this handiwork--all recognized the black acts of the White Sword and his One Hundred Champions.
"He was nowhere to be seen--*no trace of him remained*--but his bloody hand had brought Arakko time.


"And with that time, we worked wonders.
"It was our age of legends. A miracle of mutantdom. Much of the work done by brave mutant alchemists and engineers still stands to this day.


"Not all, of course. Now only a few remain, but then there were ten towers, and all the land between them was ours.


"When the army of Amenth finally came, we showed them no mercy.
"And for thousands of years, the towers held and the horde died at our border.


"Generations of mutants lived and died never knowing defeat.
"And so, I was born in glory three hundred years ago.

"As a child, all I knew was the world inside our walls.
"It was all any of us knew. It was a special kind of ignorance--living in the only safe place in a world of violence and believing it must be this way for all. We knew nothing of what Amenth truly was.

"When my crib mate, the high mutant prophet Idyll, went blind after seeing the fall of our great towers, people say Genesis laughed at him and threatened to remove his weak head from his weak shoulders.
"*Genesis.* The authority of Arakko. The mother of Horsemen. *The wife of Apocalypse.*

"And instead of striking Idyll down, she raised an army...

"They were gone for twenty years. Every few months word would arrive of their conquests--and all of Arakko would celebrate.

"We feasted on victory--*it was our birthright*--and Genesis fed us well.

"Then, two centuries ago, our army fell silent.

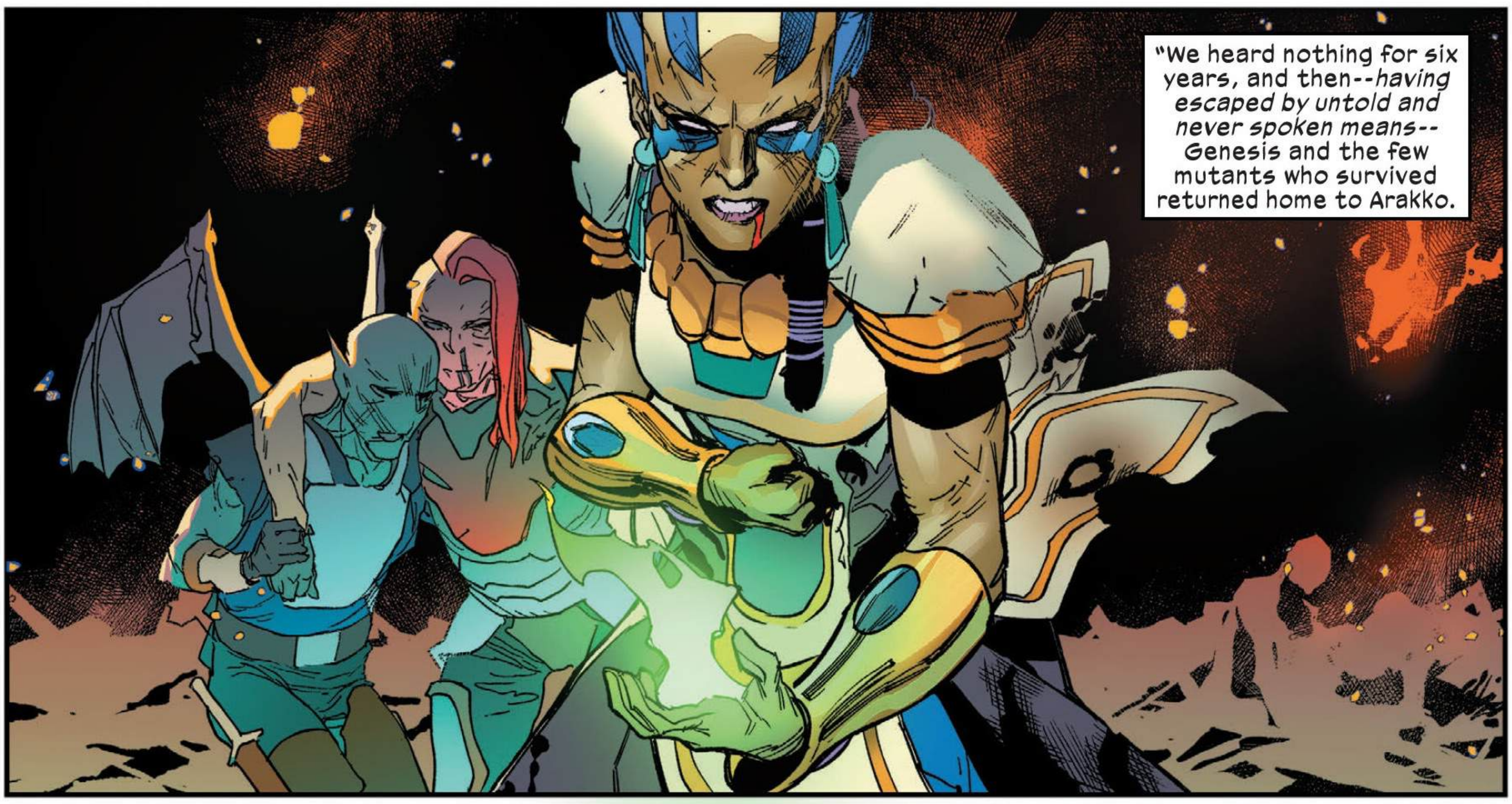
"Later, we would learn they had reached the Ivory Spire. It was the stronghold of the long-thought lost ***White Sword, Purity.***

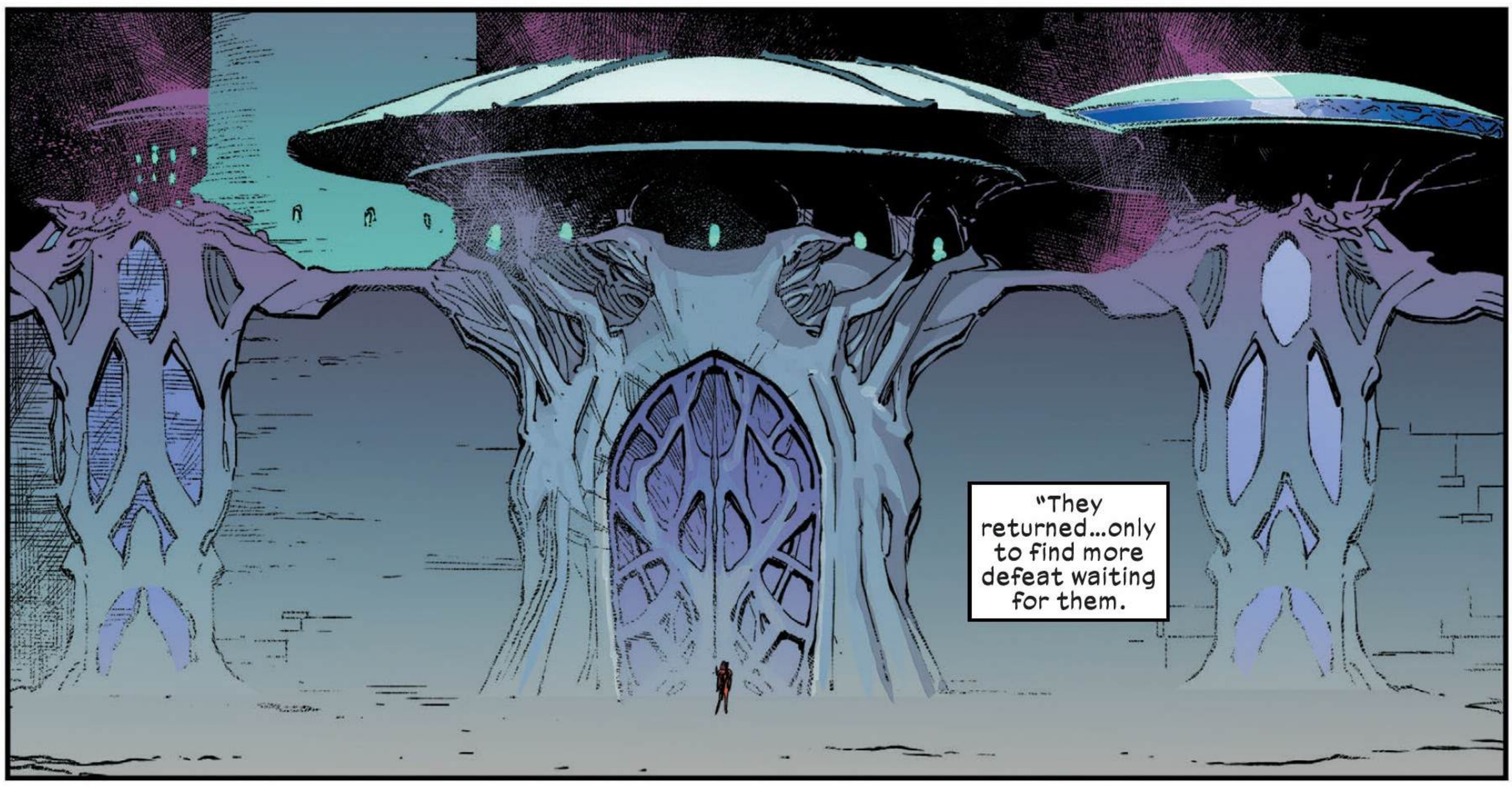
"He was our greatest healer--immortal...External. Each morning, the White Sword resurrected his one hundred champions and rode out to slaughter Amenthi daemons.

"Warring until the last soldier in his army died. Only to begin again the next day.

"Genesis said that the death and resurrection cycle he lived had become his *religion.*
"She said he had become just as alien as the horde he raged against, and we mutants of Arakko were the same to him.

"We tasted our first defeat at the hands of one of our own.

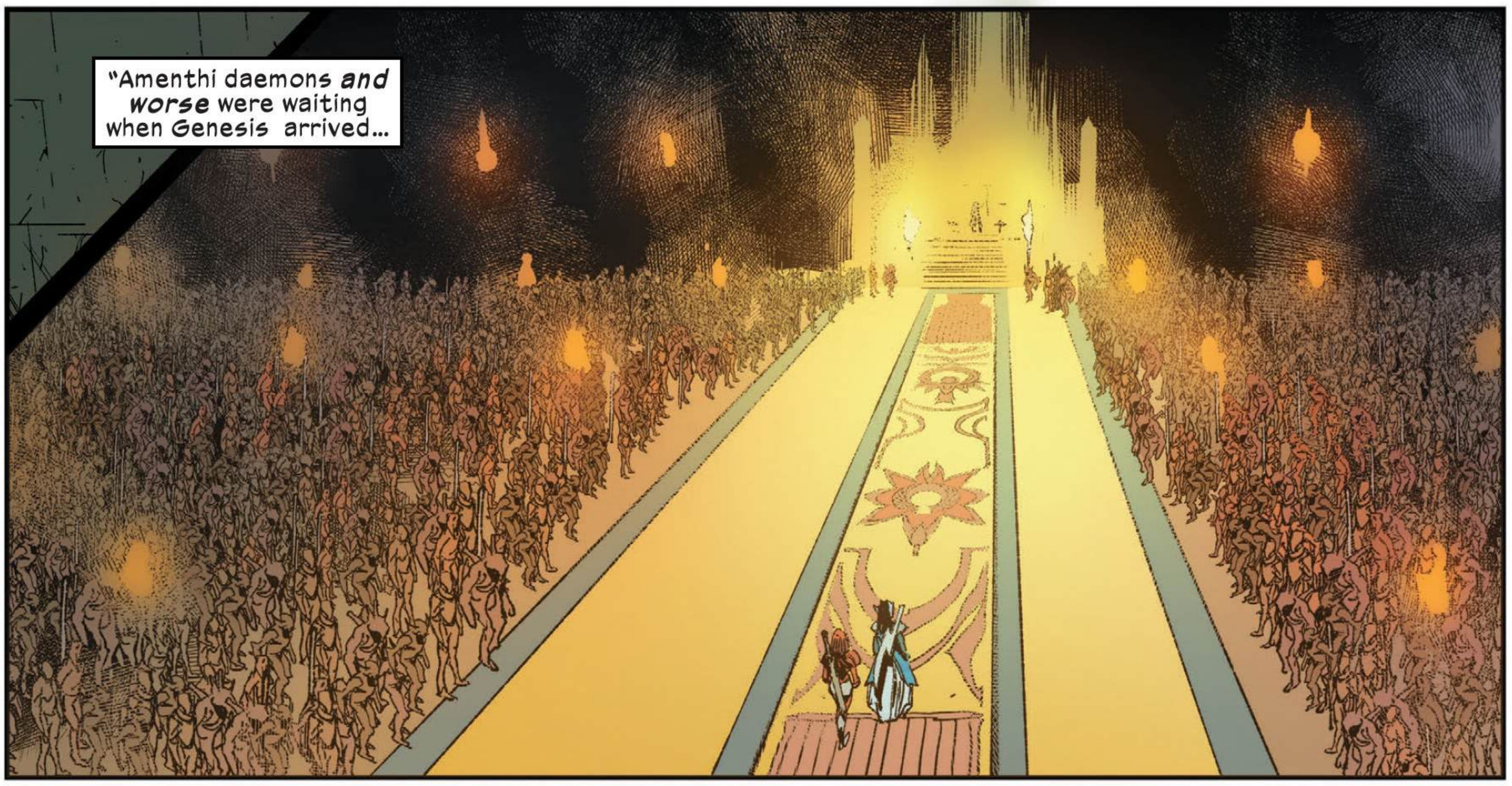

"We heard nothing for six years, and then--*having escaped by untold and never spoken means*--Genesis and the few mutants who survived returned home to Arakko.


"They returned...only to find more defeat waiting for them.

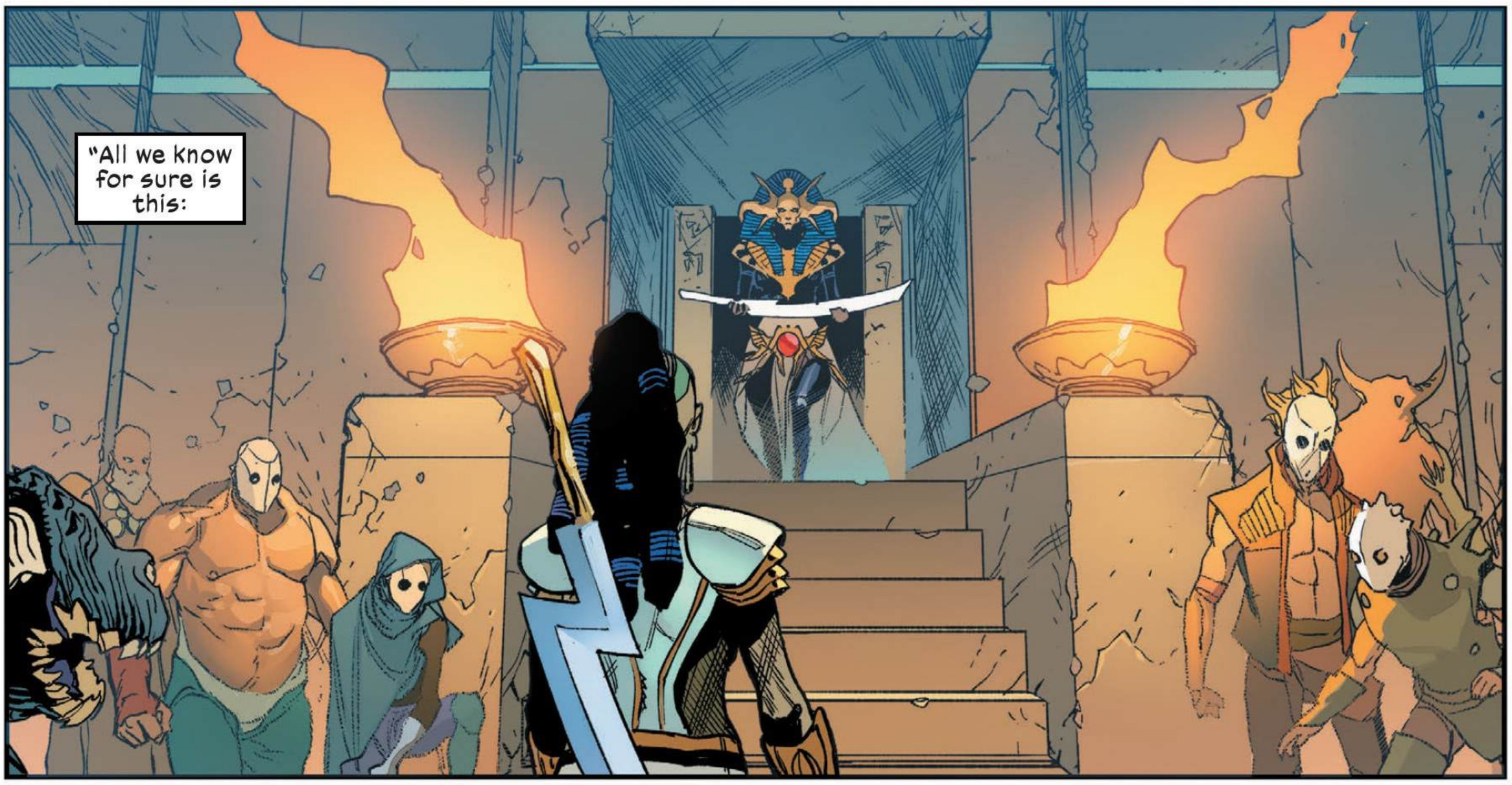
"Isca, the traitor. Isca, the unbeaten.
"Her mutant power was that she could not lose--it was her power that forced her to join Amenth in the war against Okkara...
"Understand? She had to... They were going to win...and she cannot lose.

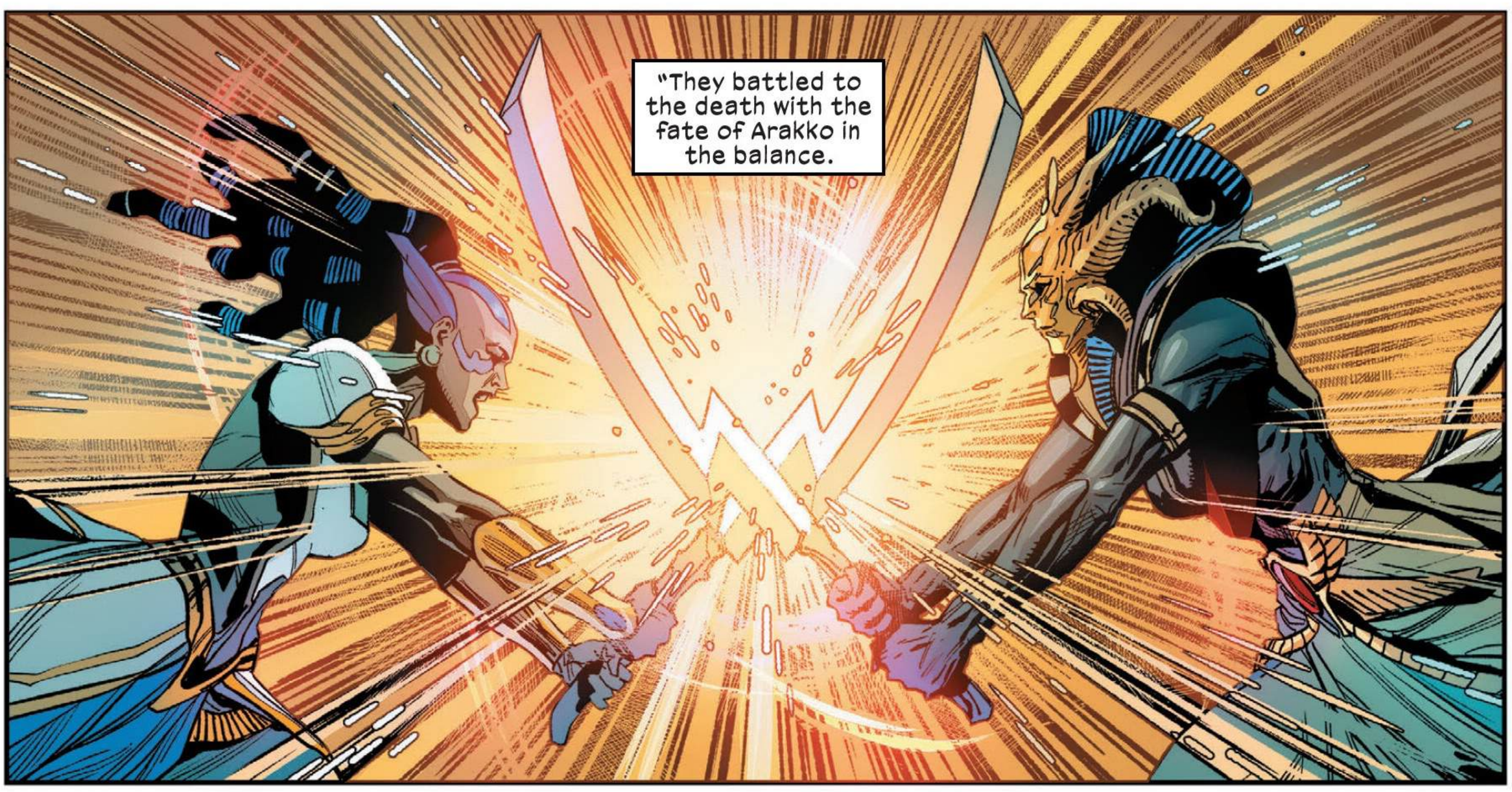
"Isca had been sent to invite Genesis to parlay with Annihilation--the god of Amenth--at the seat of the golden helm's power in the capital city of Amenth.
"No one knows what words passed between them, just that Genesis accepted.

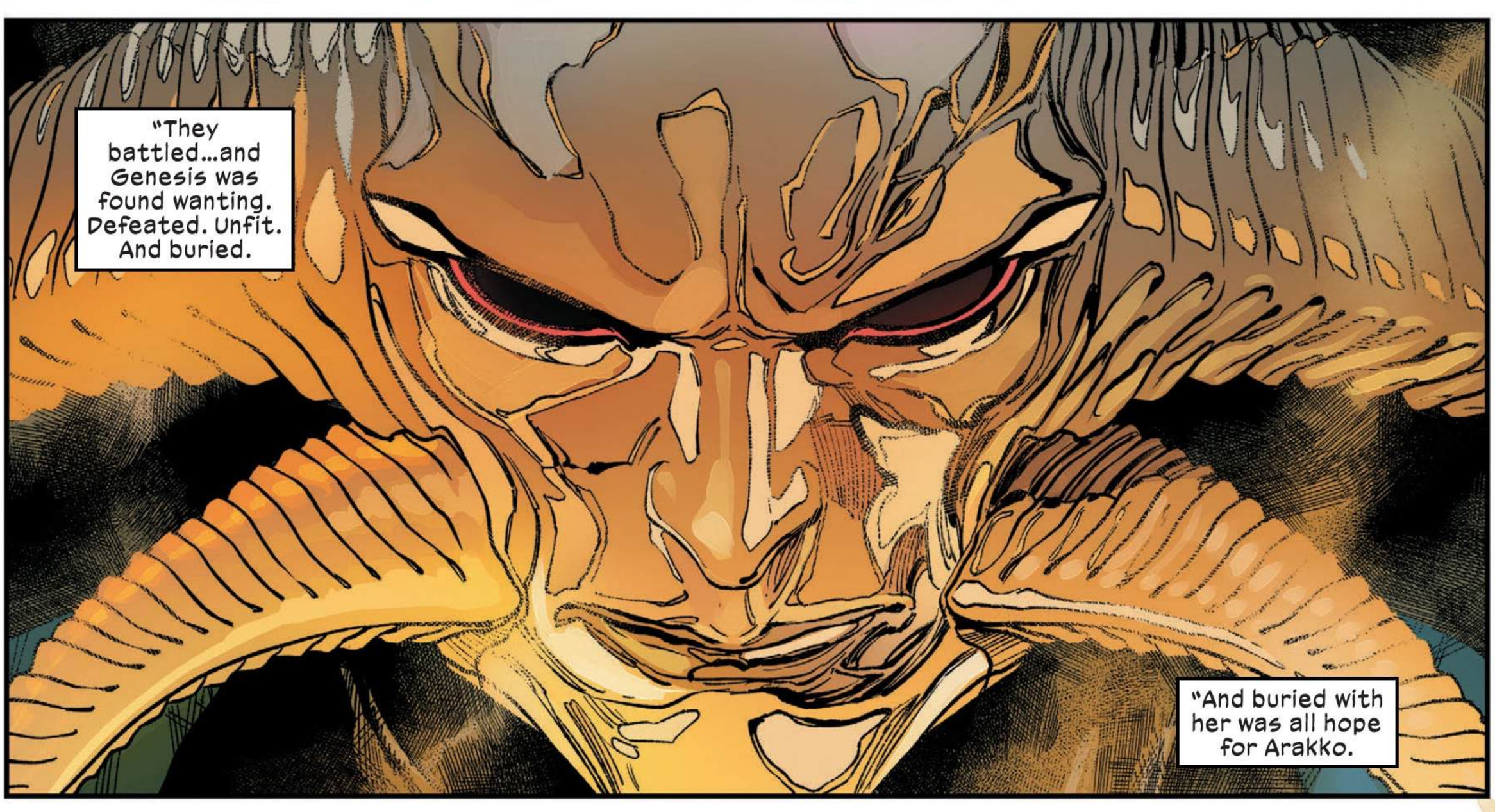
"It is said the great hall of Annihilation was full that day.
"That the full might of Amenth was witnessed for the first time.

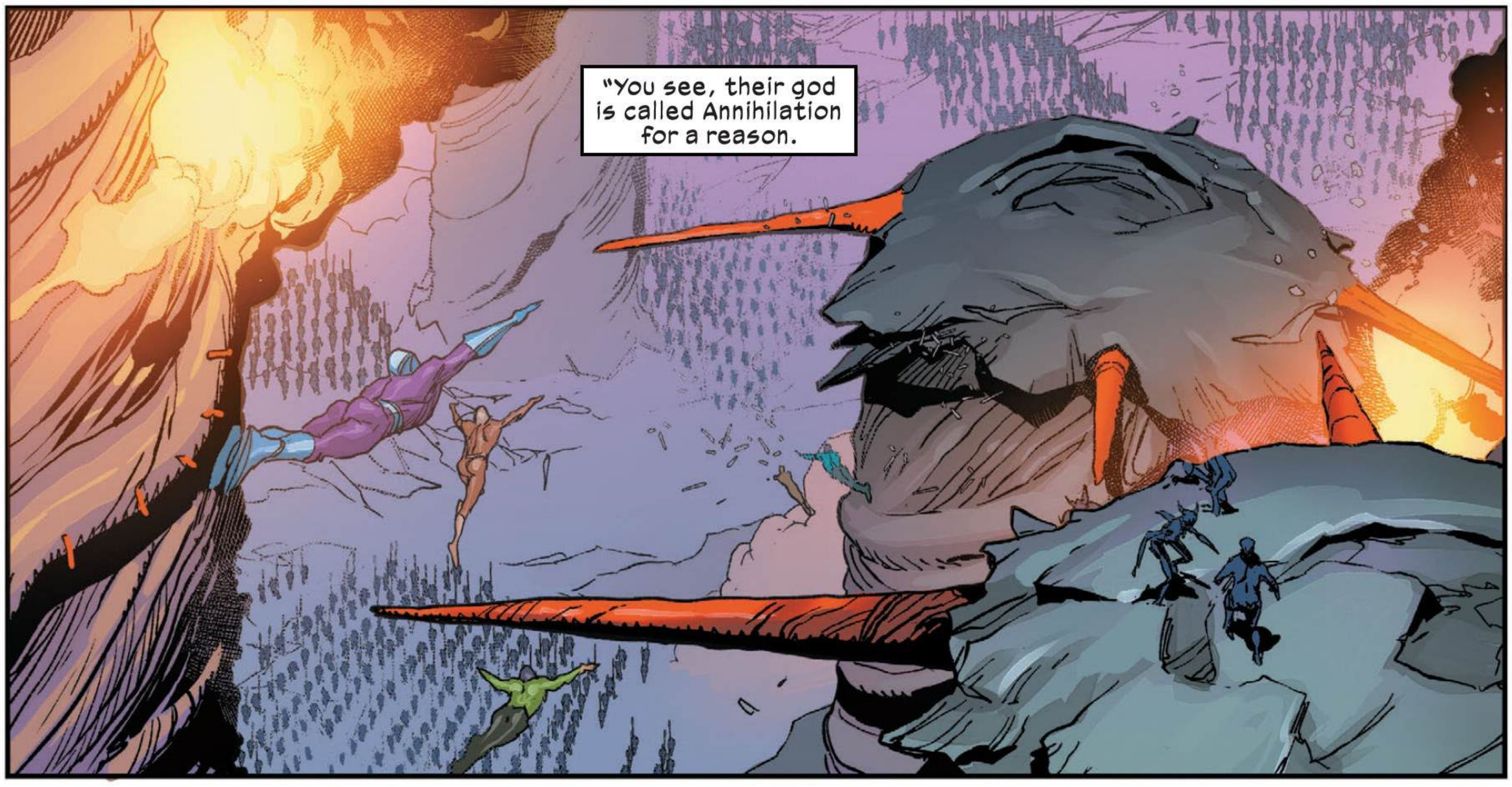

"Amenthi daemons *and worse* were waiting when Genesis arrived...

"I wonder, were they silent as Genesis approached Annihilation's throne?
"Did they scream and rage? Or did they mock and jeer?

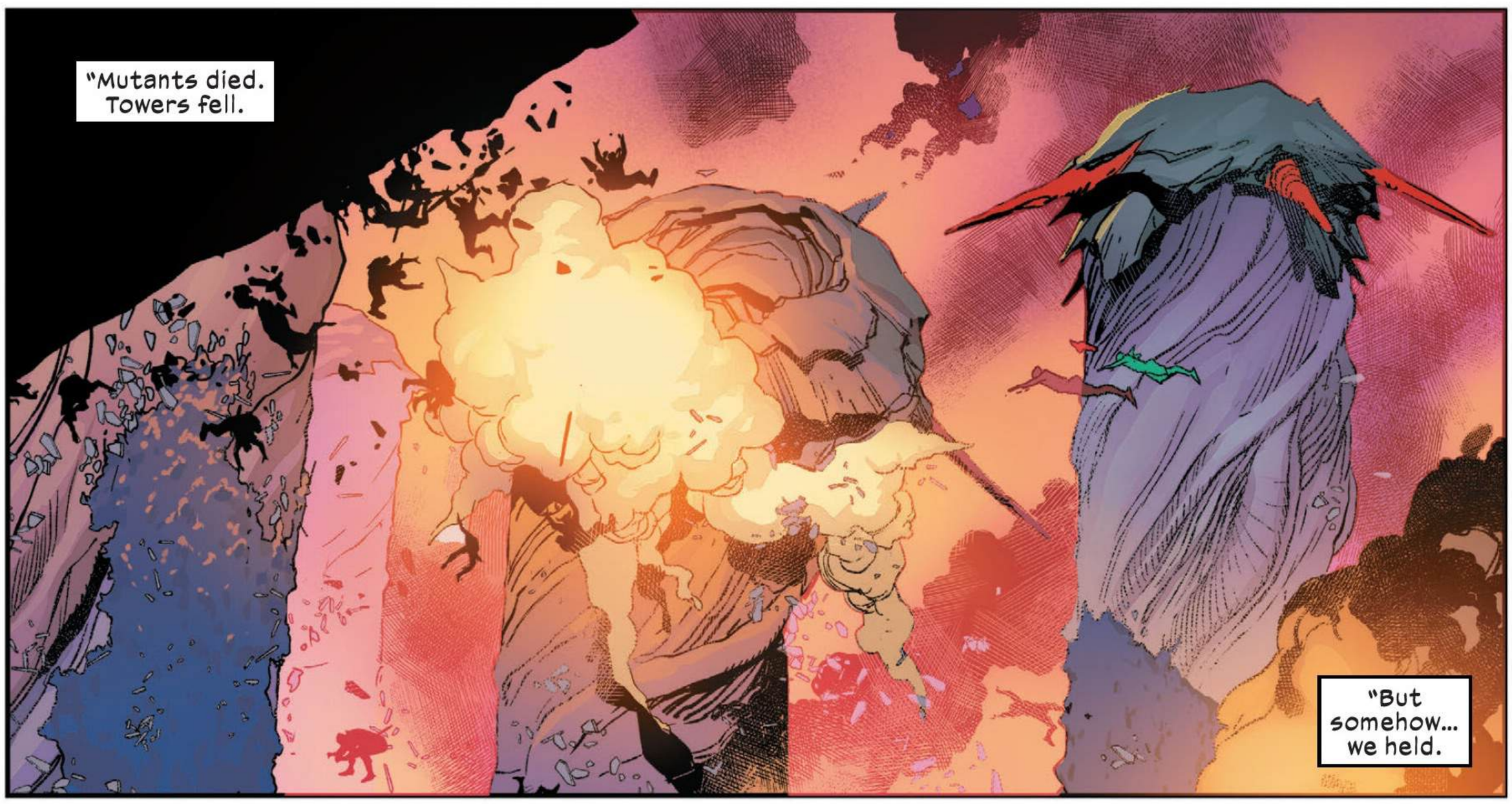

"All we know for sure is this:

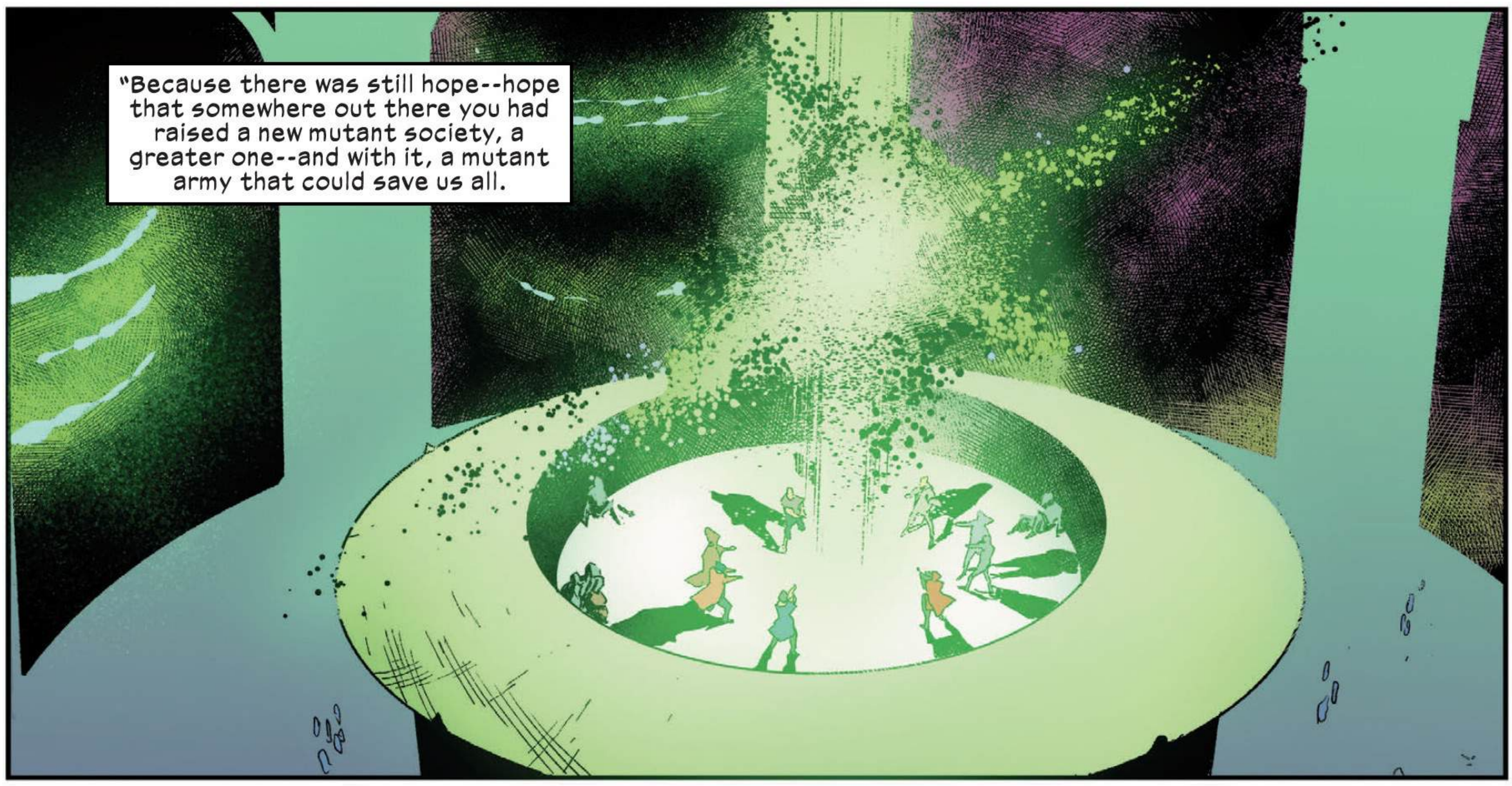

"They battled to the death with the fate of Arakko in the balance.


"They battled...and Genesis was found wanting. Defeated. Unfit. And buried.
"And buried with her was all hope for Arakko.

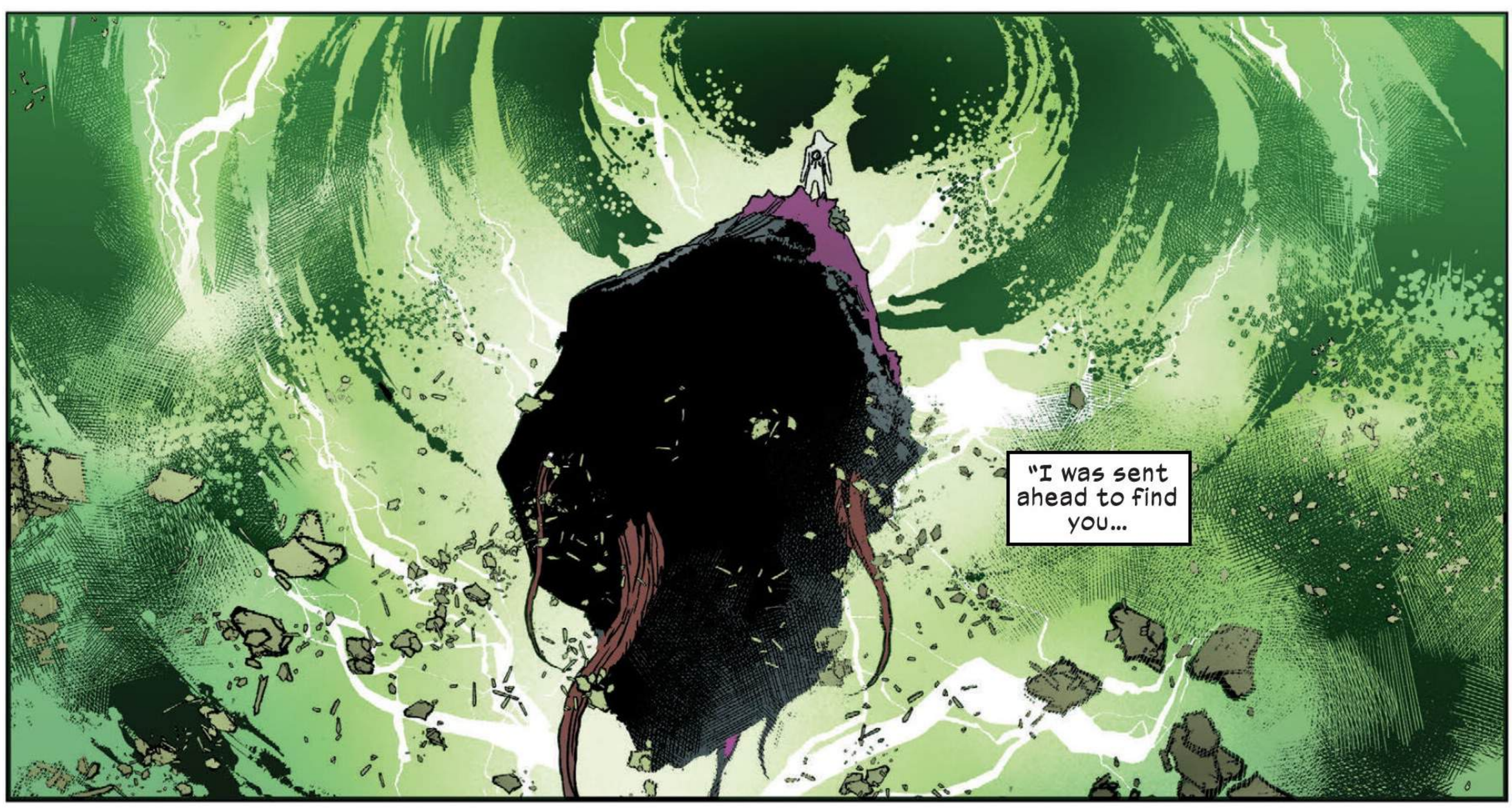

"You see, their god is called Annihilation for a reason.

"For one hundred years, the mad horde--the true might of Amenth--battered the walls of Arakko.

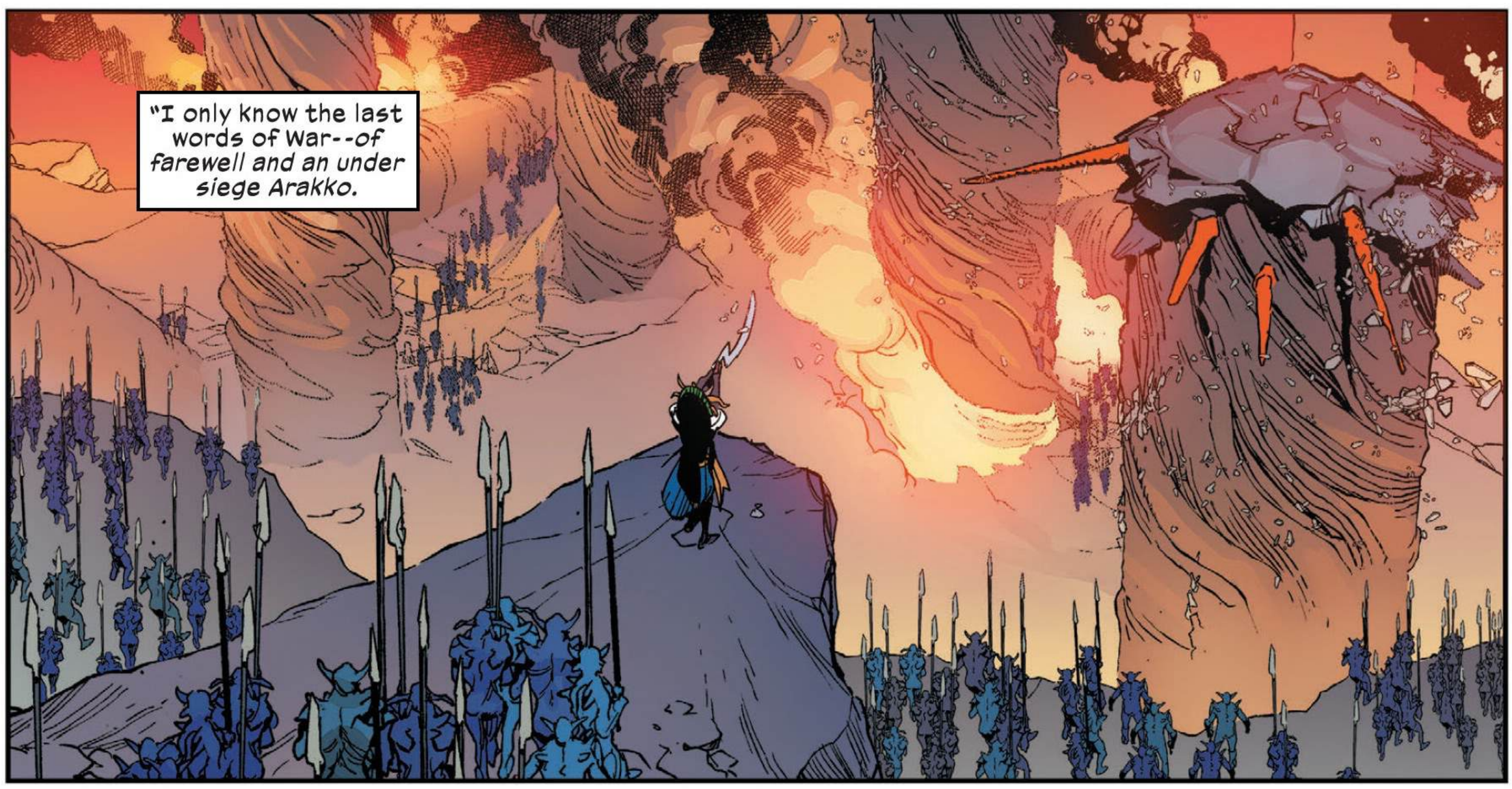

"Mutants died. Towers fell.
"But somehow... we held.


"Because there was still hope--hope that somewhere out there you had raised a new mutant society, a greater one--and with it, a mutant army that could save us all.

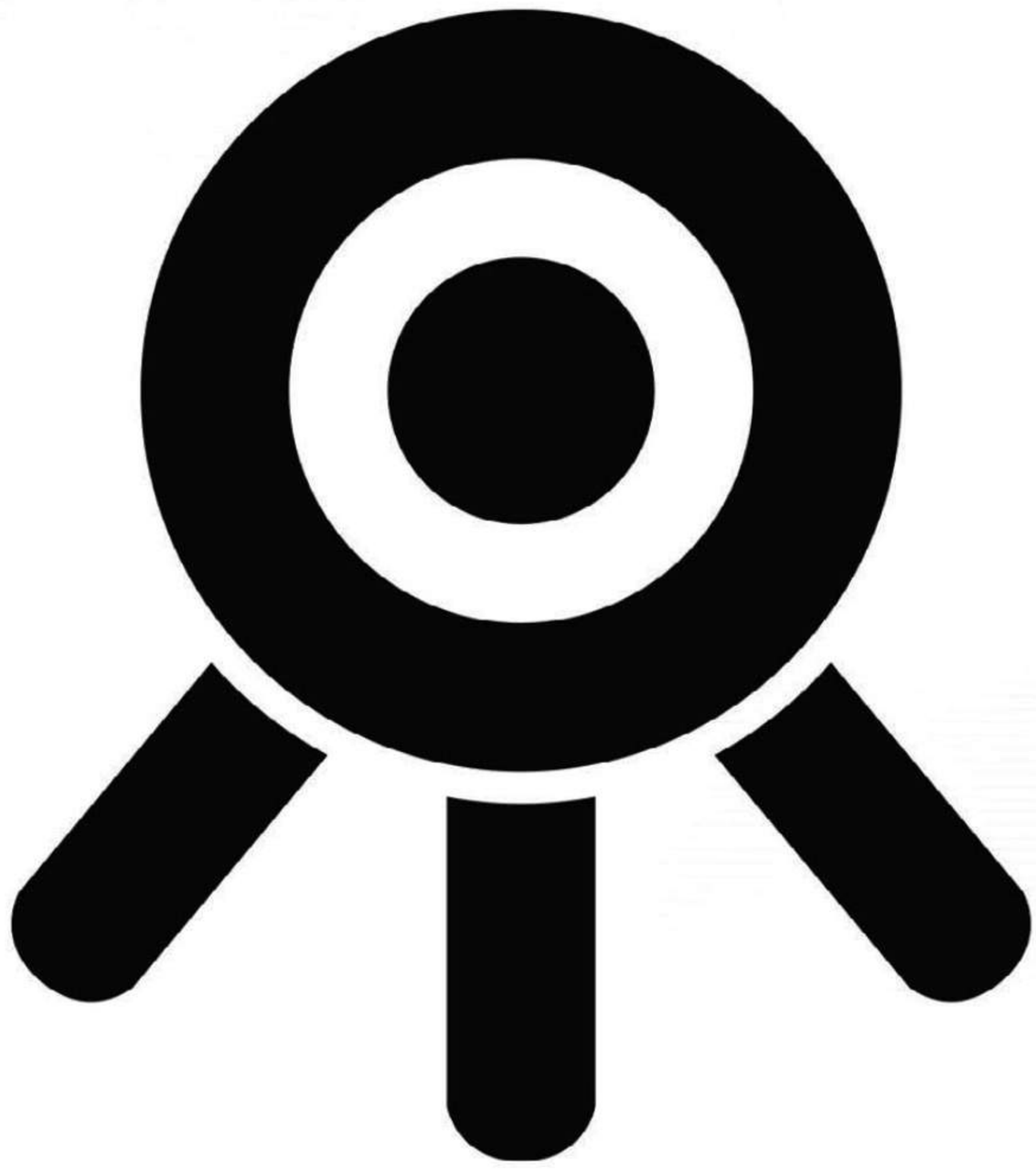
"We held out...until we couldn't any longer.


"I was sent ahead to find you...

"Others sought out a different kind of salvation...
"But I know nothing of their success or failure...


"I only know the last words of War--of farewell and an under siege Arakko.

"Grandfather--great Apocalypse--we are out of time.
"Amenth is on the march...
"...and only you can *save us.*"



# SUMMONERS OF AMENTH

Behold the power of the Summoner school of Amenth. They are nameless adepts and ageless wizards of the black world and can touch that dark place hidden to most practitioners.

Know a Summoner by their mark, which they must wear at all times. See the mark and know them -- not by any other sight, any words or any deeds.

They serve an alien power. A lure deeper than their connection to the waking world. Remember this, and act accordingly.

**SUMMONER MINOR**

Traditional Number:
**600 [CURRENTLY: 350]**

Able to summon a single host or minor deamon.

**SUMMONER ADEPT**

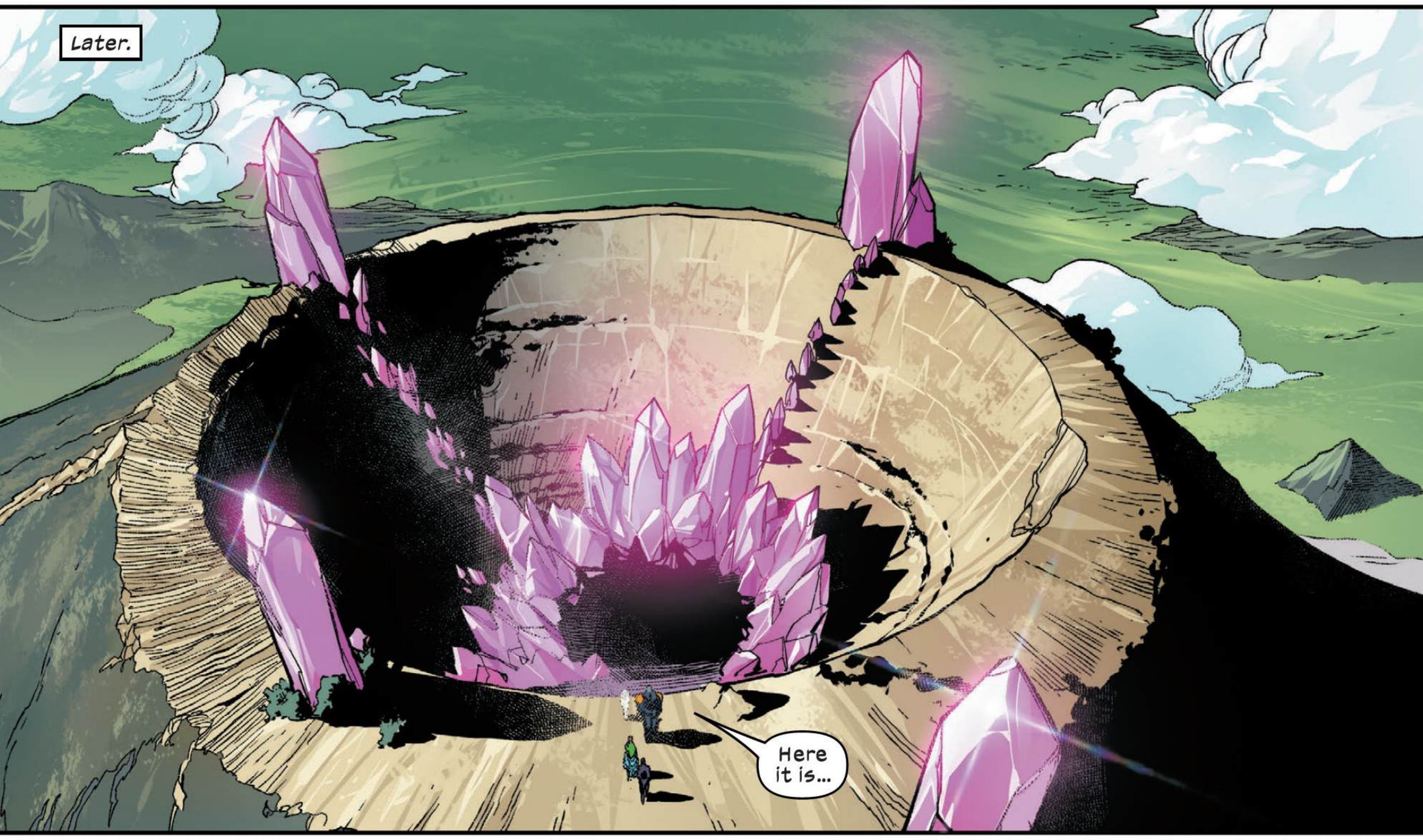
Number:
**30 [CURRENTLY: 22]**

Able to summon a small horde of minor deamons or one major elemental.

**HIGH SUMMONER**

Number:
**3 [CURRENTLY: 2]**

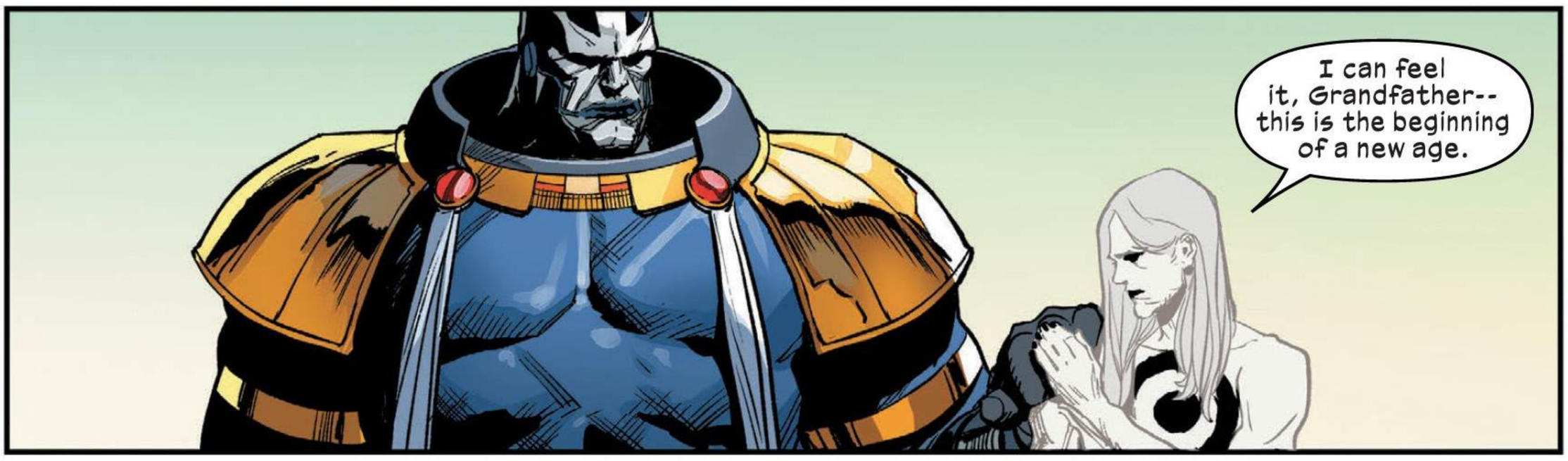
Able to summon a horde of elementals and up to three major deamons.


Later.
Here it is...

As I said...the price was paid--I have done the work.
I have built the External Gate.

Unus the Untouchable and Banshee will accompany--*and protect*--you across ***Otherworld*** to ***Arakko.***
I'm a traveling man, always happy to see the sights.
*I want you to find our path and herald my return...*

...and as you do, I will marshal the might of Krakoa to rescue Arakko and heal that which was wounded so long ago.
However, if you find that Arakko has fallen...then return quickly...
So that you might save any survivors? Rescue any enslaved?
That... and have my long-awaited ***revenge.***



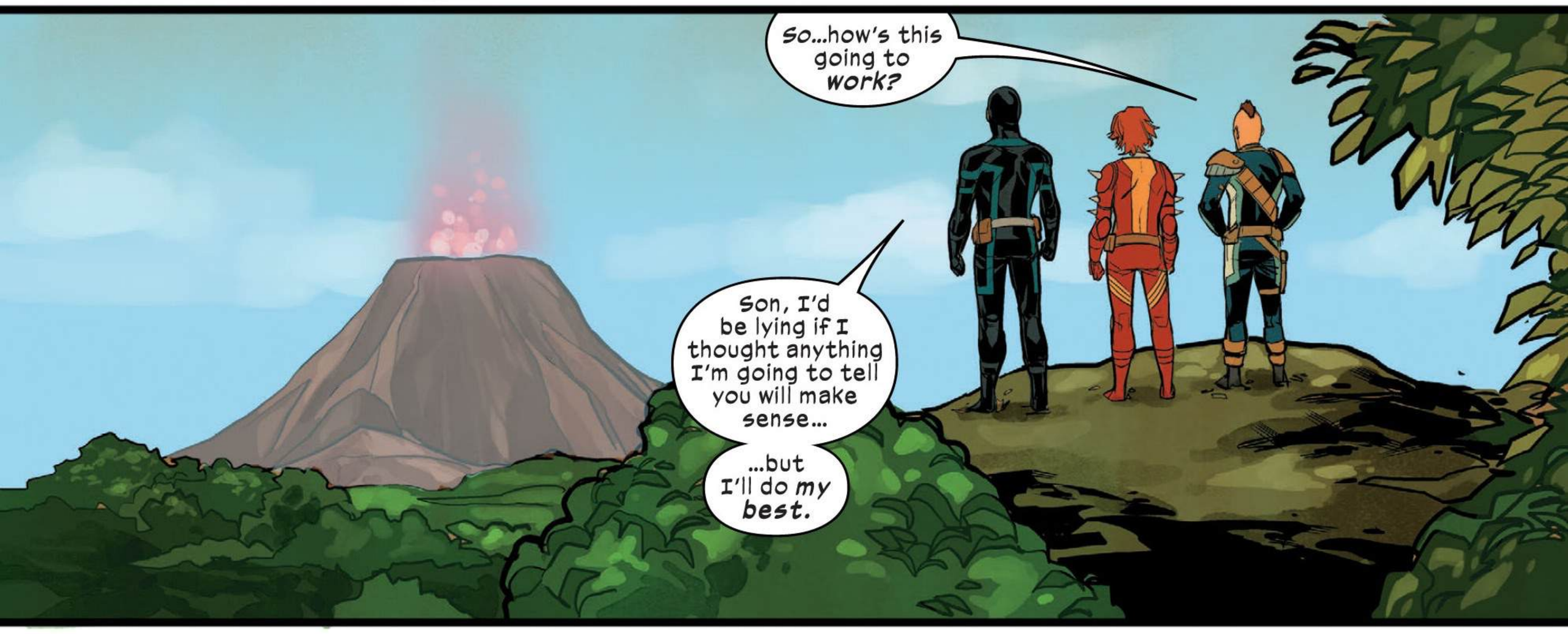
...I will greet you in the manner befitting not just a hero of Krakoa...

...but as the father-- *and true heir*-- of Arakko.

# Sworded Out

# 18

Krakoa.


So...how's this going to work?
Son, I'd be lying if I thought anything I'm going to tell you will make sense...
...but I'll do my best.

"The Arakko Point is a small, dormant piece of Arakko that joined with Krakoa.
"The two halves of what was once a single island."

The one land.
Okkara.
Exactly.

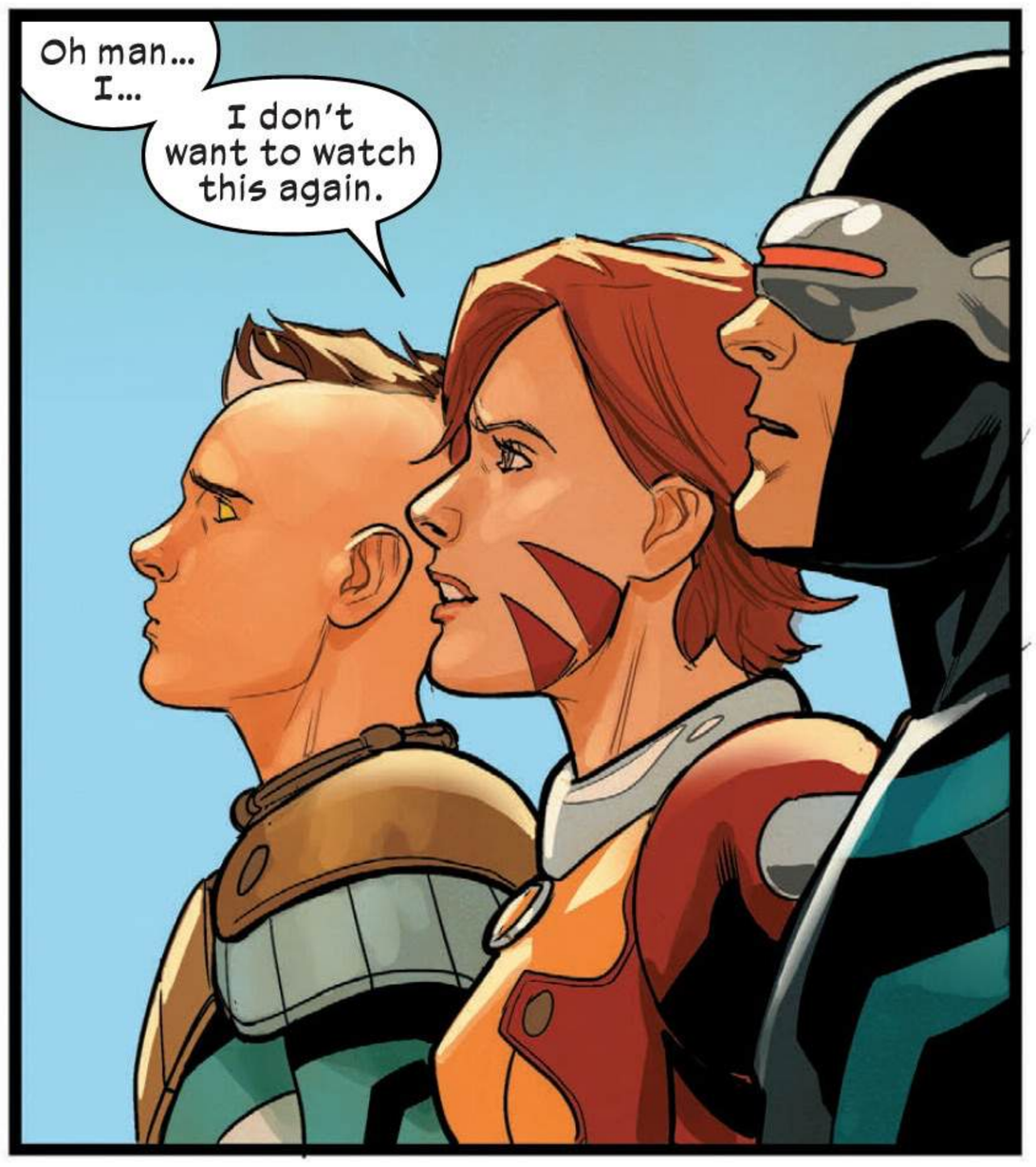
"Right now, Krakoa is pushing the Arakko Point away from itself--disengaging the smaller island...

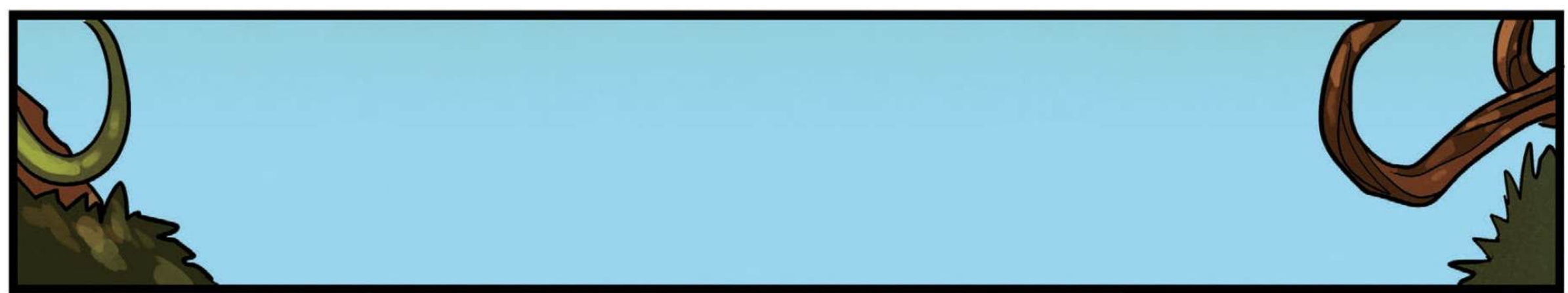
"...because that's where the External Gate is located.

"Which--by inverting the gate--is supposedly how we're going to get the whole of Arakko here."

Okay. Sure.
But, again...how's that work?
Honestly, I have no idea.

Well, whatever it is...
"...it's starting."
Oh...
That's big.
Pfft. I've seen bigger.
Shut up.


Oh man... I...
I don't want to watch this again.



Huh.
Is it just me...or is something *wrong?*
Dad... I don't think there's any love on these islands.

No, son...
...it appears *there is not.*

# TWO ISLANDS

Following a tournament of swords, the island of Krakoa is reuniting with its long-lost other half, Arakko -- but what that means for mutantkind, both Krakoan and Arakkii, remains to be seen...

Cyclops

Rachel Summers

Cable

Cypher

Professor X

Kate Pryde

Magneto

Emma Frost

Mystique

Exodus

Nightcrawler

Sebastian Shaw

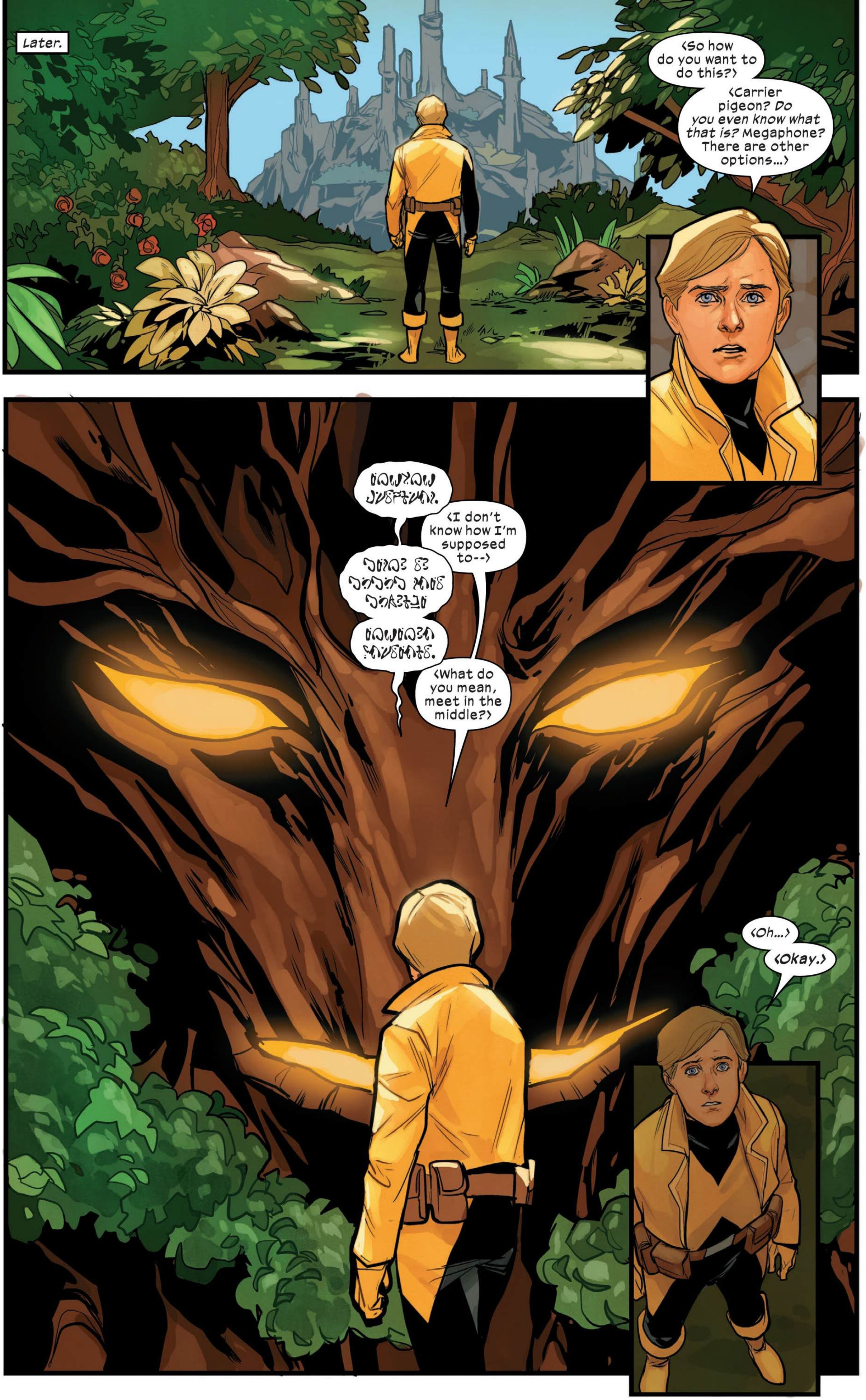
Mister Sinister

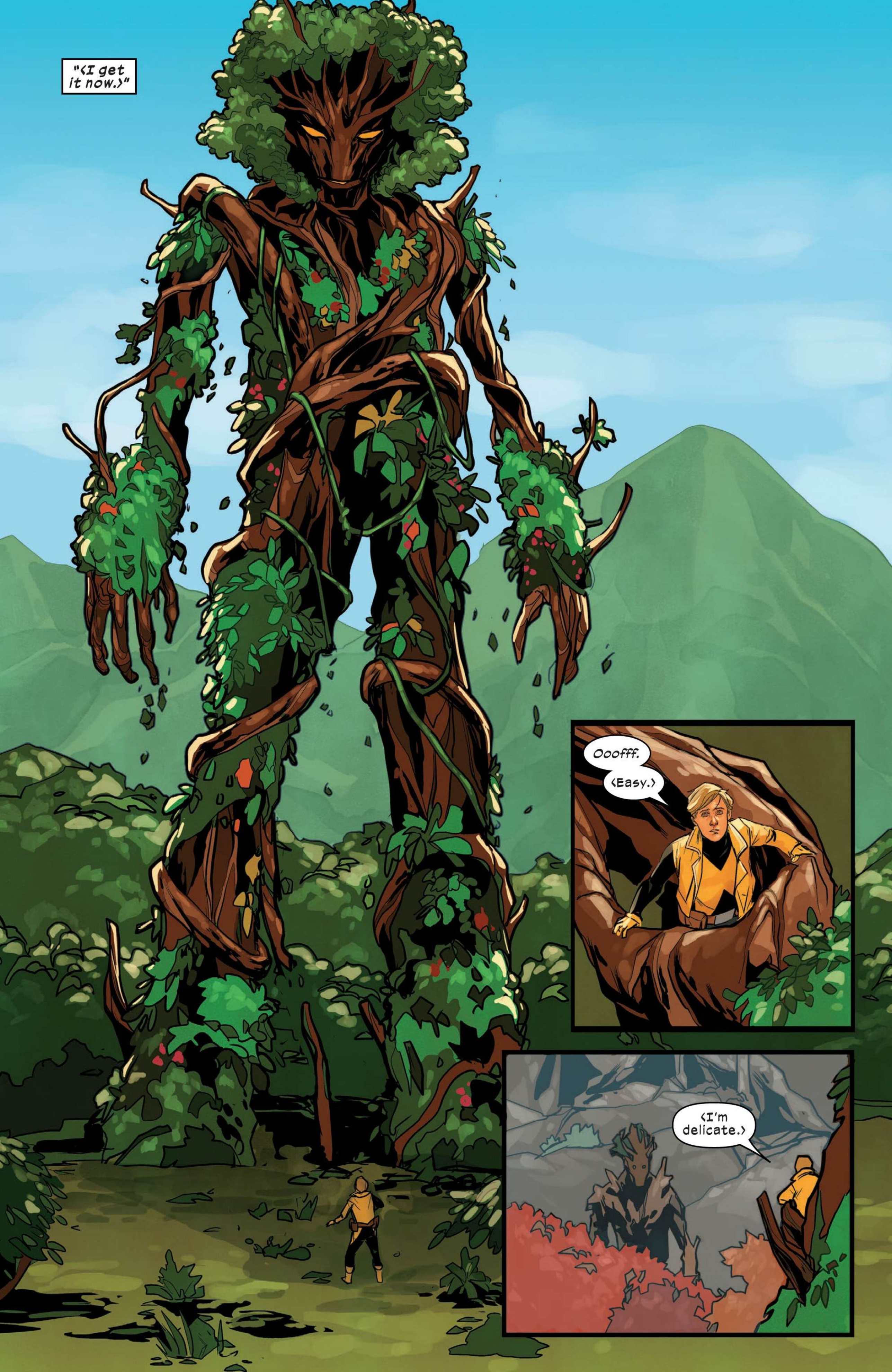
Storm

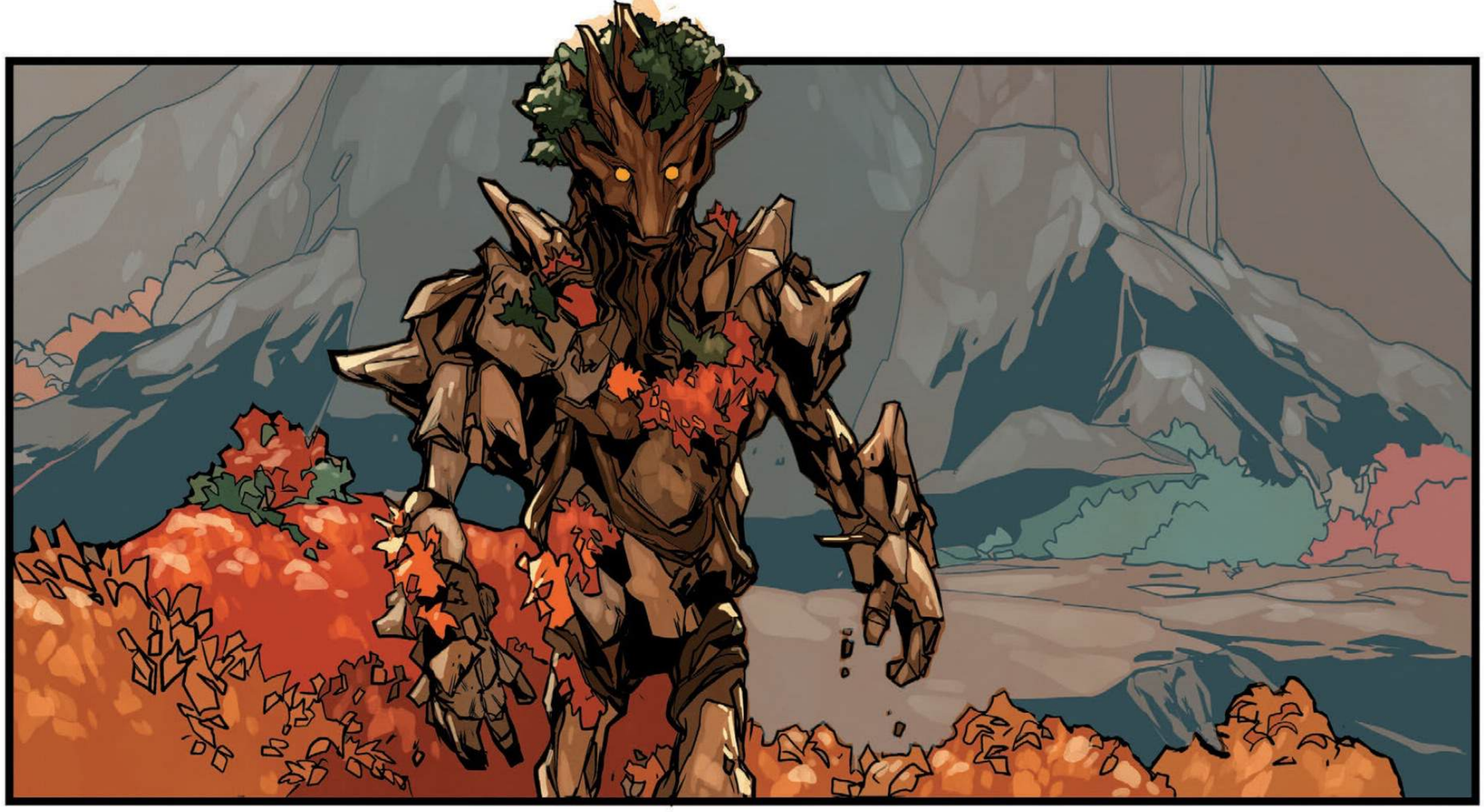
Isca the Unbeaten

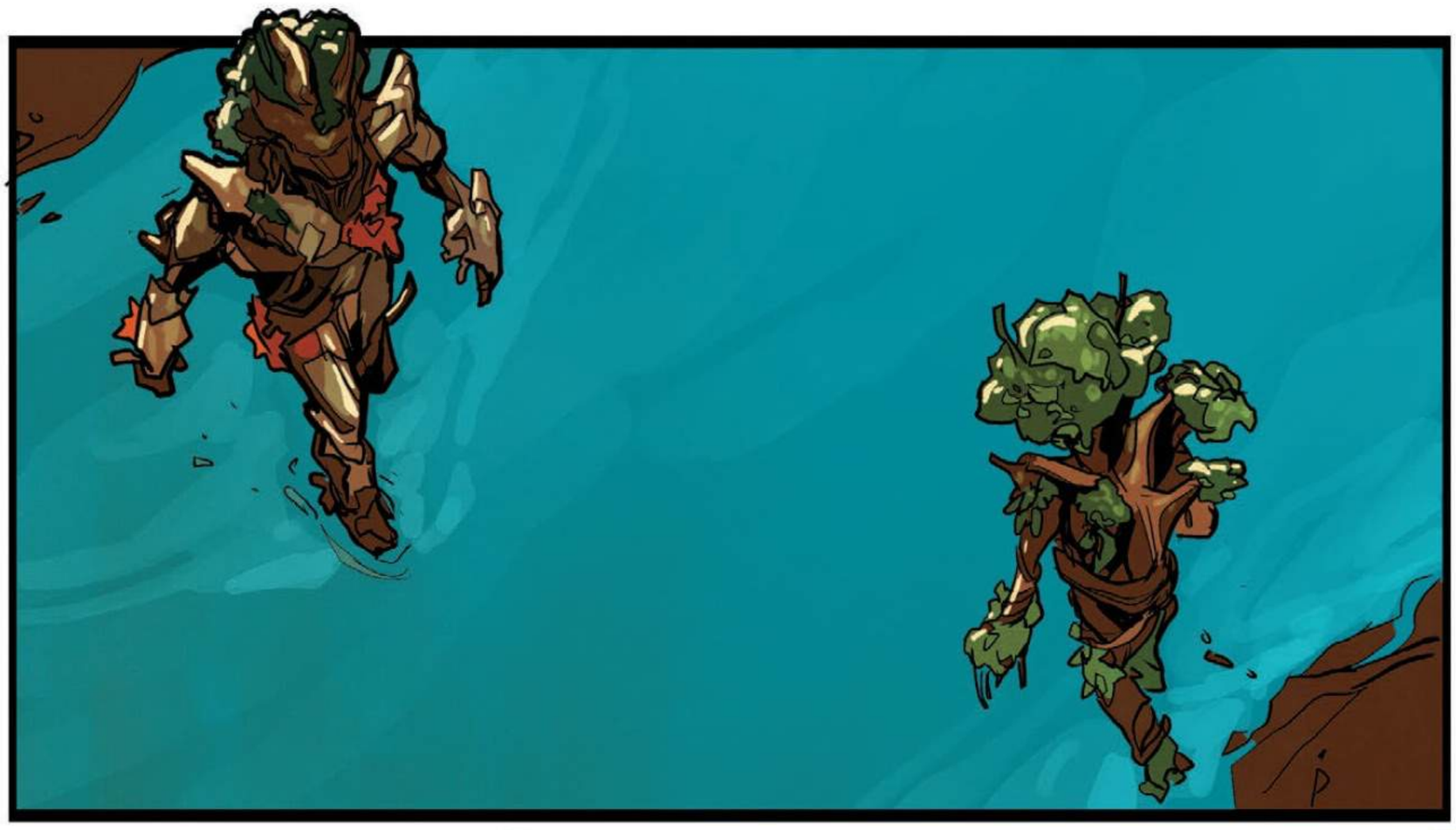
Jean Grey

*Chapters 12-15 can be found in X OF SWORDS.


Later.
‹So how do you want to do this?›
‹Carrier pigeon? Do you even know what that is? Megaphone? There are other options...›
‹I don't know how I'm supposed to--›
‹What do you mean, meet in the middle?›
‹Oh...›
‹Okay.›


"<I get it now.>"
Ooofff.
<Easy.>
<I'm delicate.>

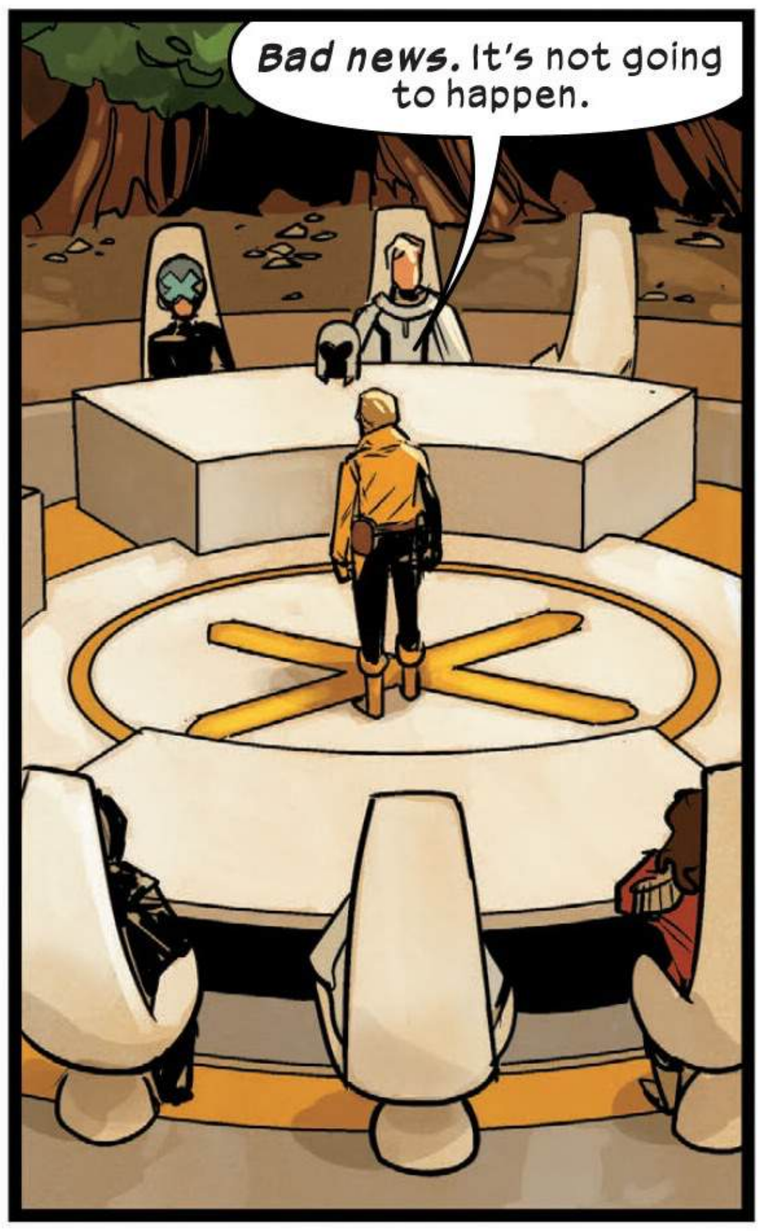


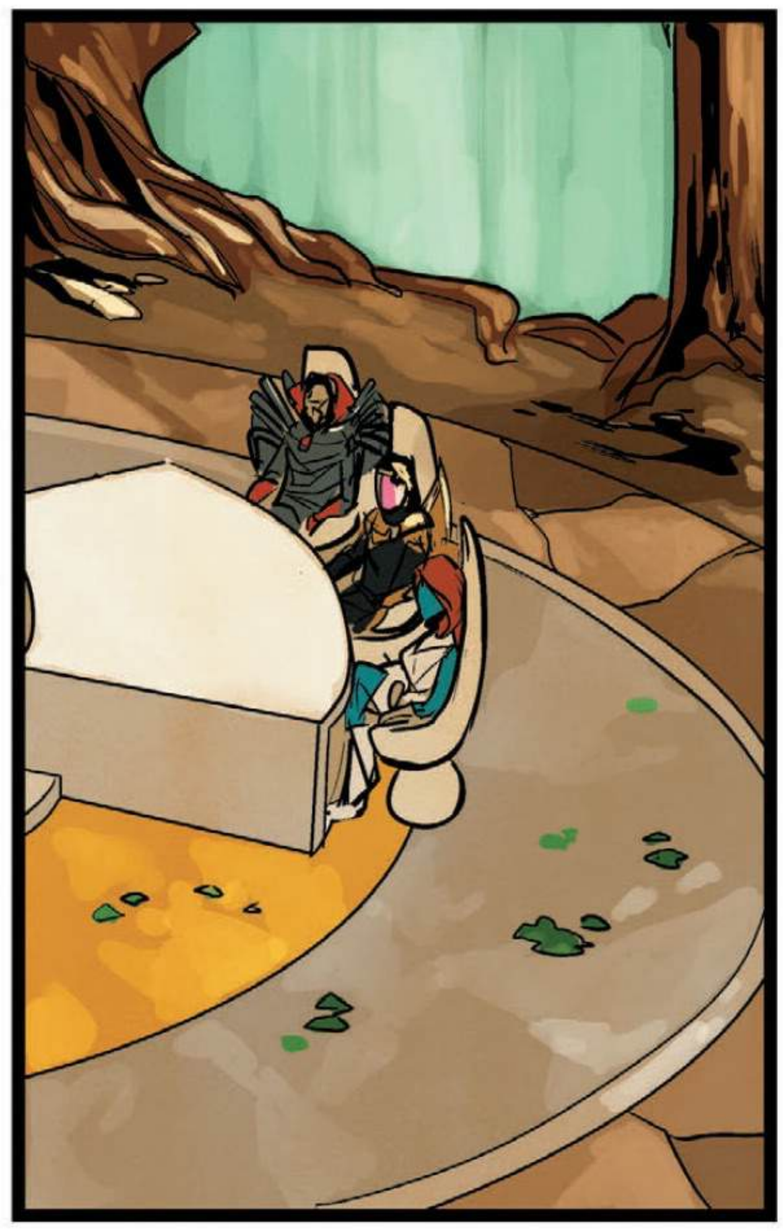


‹All right...›

‹...let's figure this out.›

Later. The Quiet Council.


Bad news. It's not going to happen.

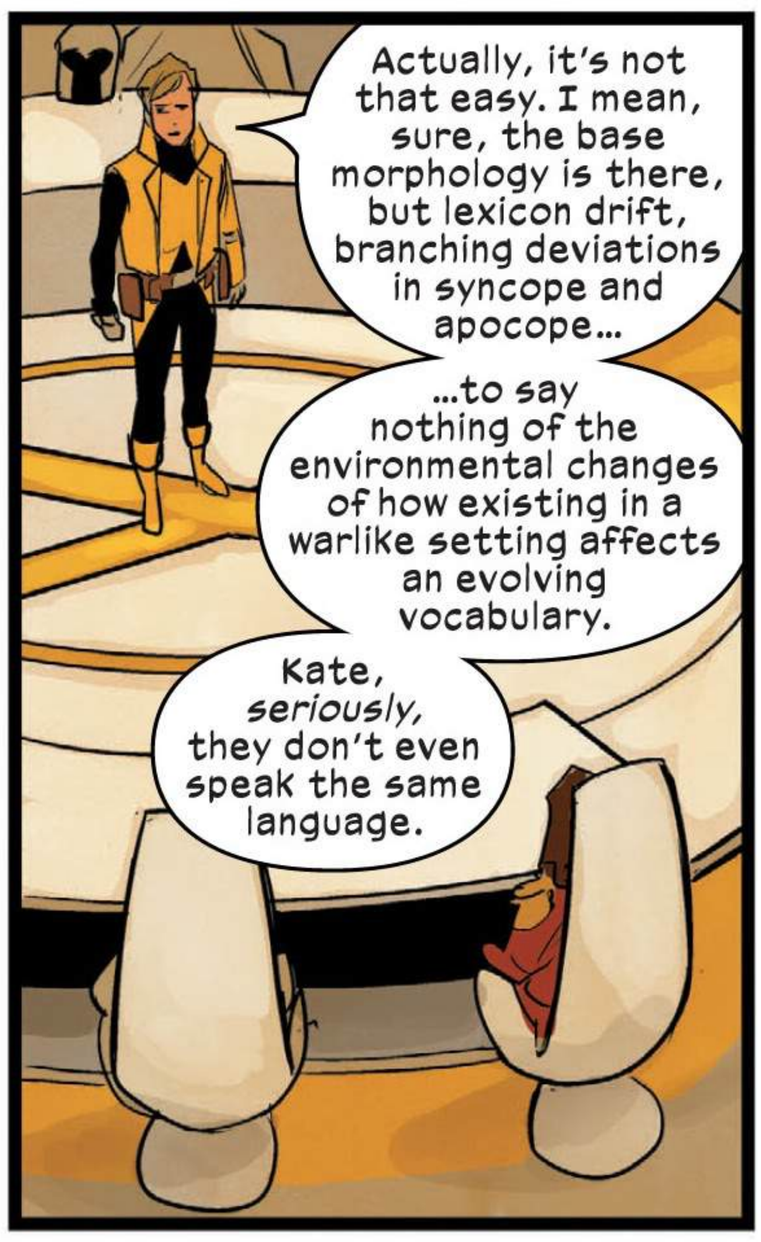


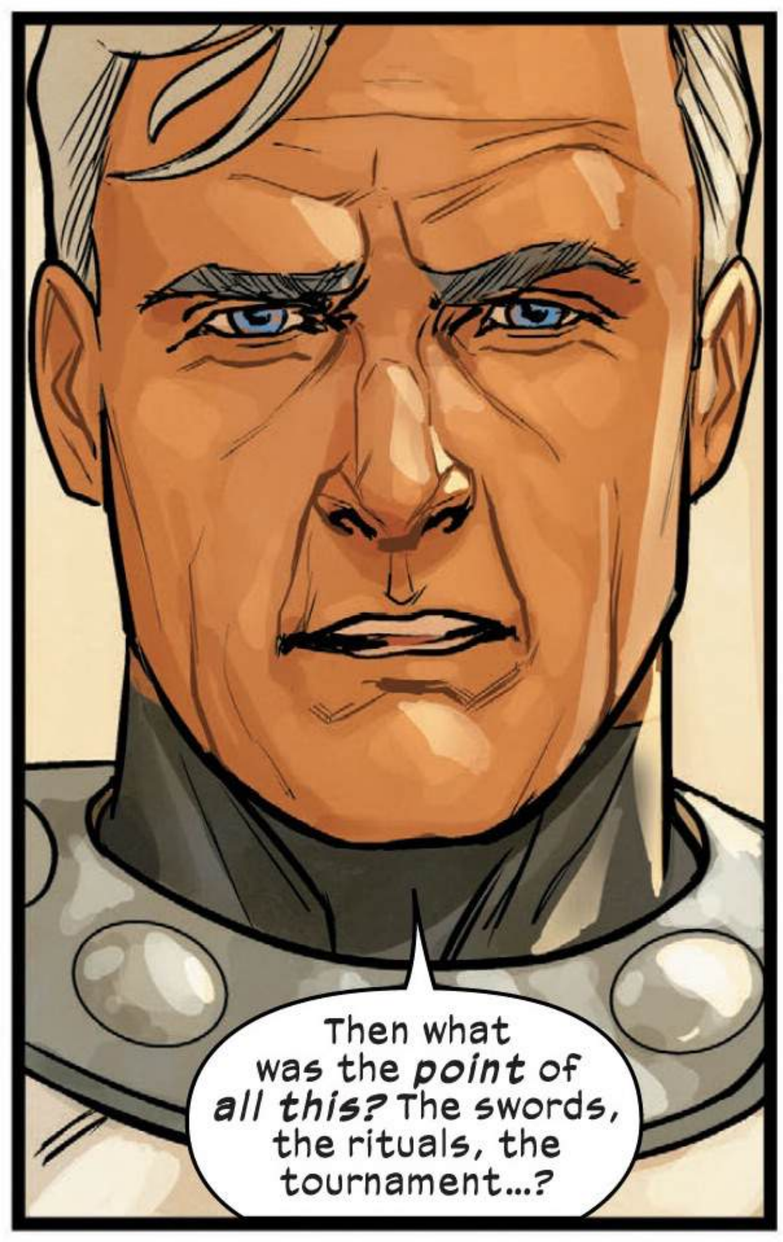
There's not going to be a reunification of the islands.

Why not?

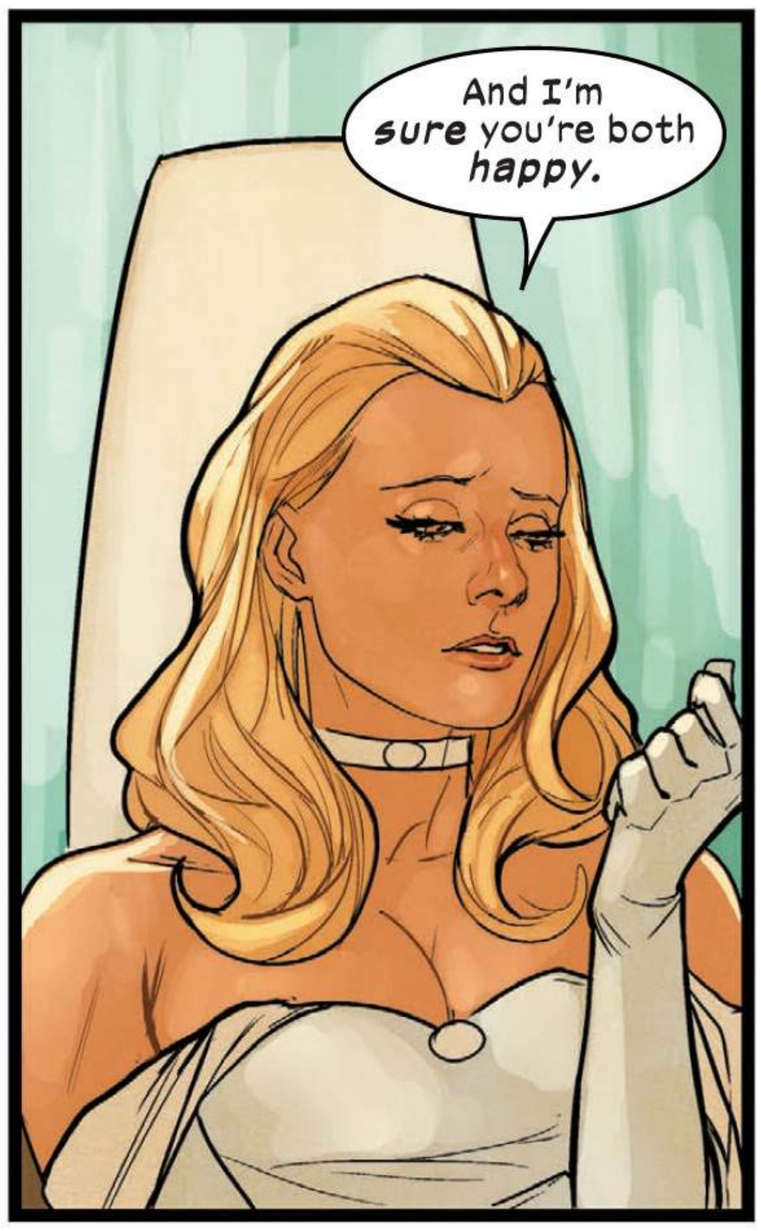
It's been thousands of years. They don't seem to be interested in the idea.
Honestly, I don't think they like each other anymore.

Well...can't they just talk it out?


Actually, it's not that easy. I mean, sure, the base morphology is there, but lexicon drift, branching deviations in syncope and apocope...
...to say nothing of the environmental changes of how existing in a warlike setting affects an evolving vocabulary.
Kate, seriously, they don't even speak the same language.

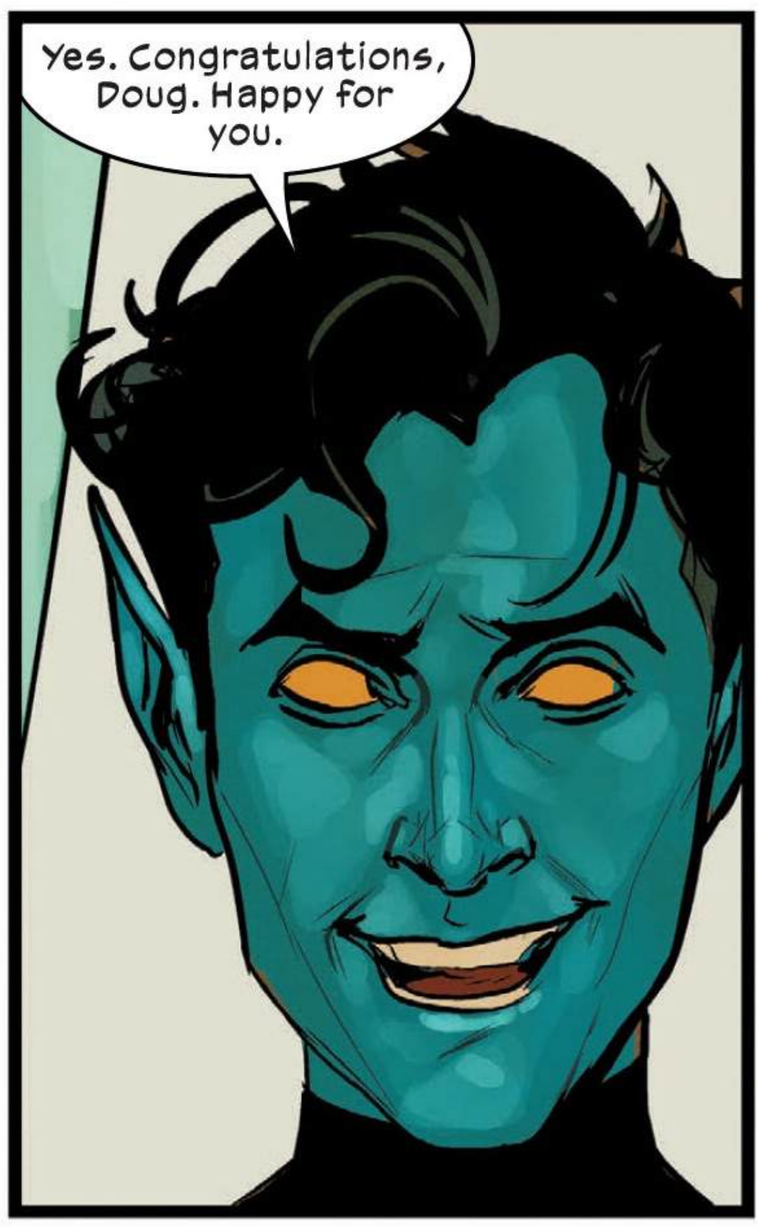

Then what was the point of all this? The swords, the rituals, the tournament...?

...
I've got a wife now.


And I'm *sure* you're both *happy.*

*I'm not.*

Nonsense. This is a time for joy. I applaud you on your conquest, young mutant.
Love is... a *complicated adversary,* and today you are a ***victor.***


Yes. Congratulations, Doug. Happy for you.

And may your first mutant be an Omega mutant.

Thanks, everyone, but--
But we have other-- more urgent-- matters at hand.

Isn't that right, Douglas?

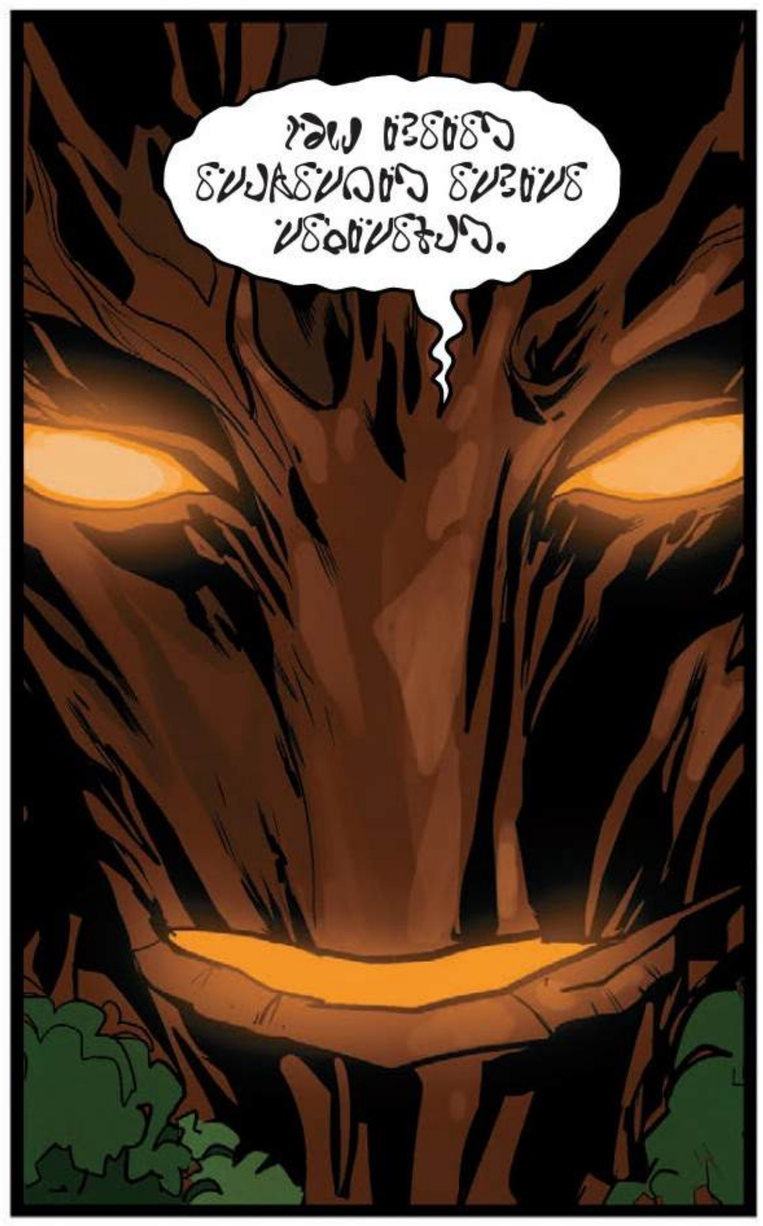
*Yes, sir.*

What about you, Sinister?
You must have some insight into all this since you are, in fact, the only person in this room with experience on that island.
Care to illuminate us?

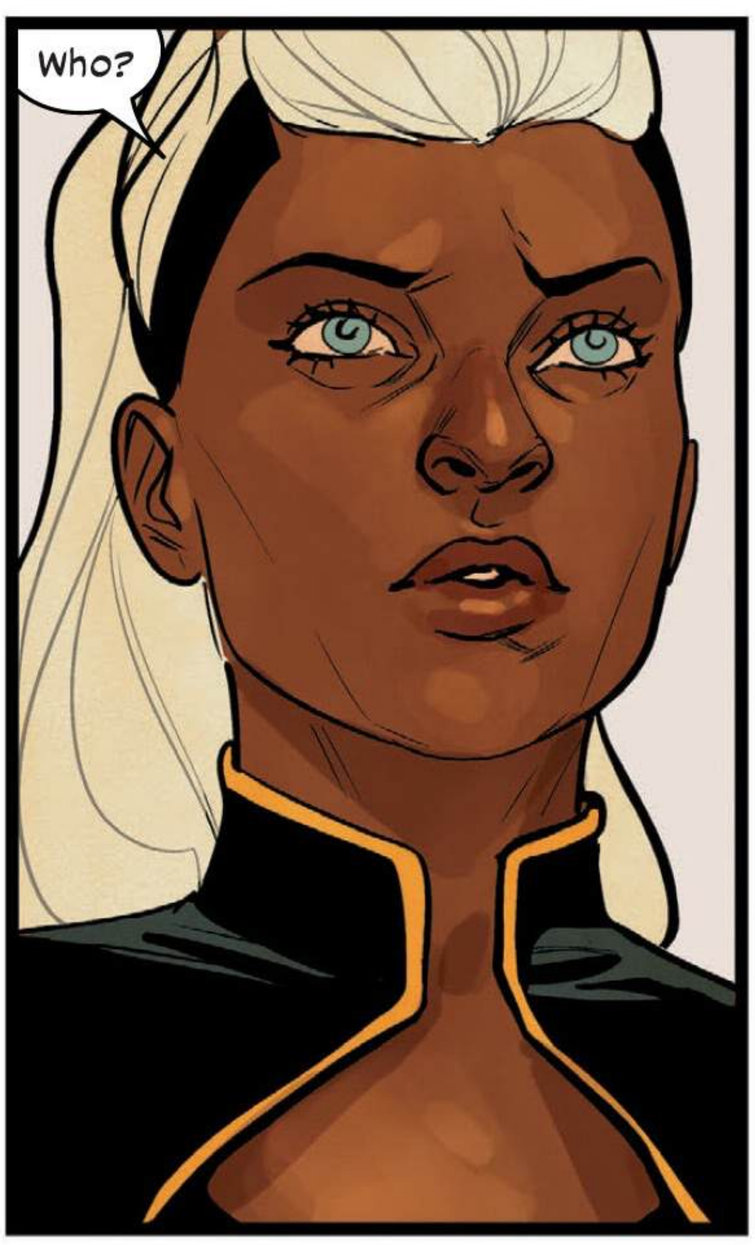
I'd rather not.
I've been through a lot, and I don't want to talk about it.

Douglas, can you please--*please*-- ask Krakoa if there is any way that our two islands can find some common ground?

...
÷Sigh÷
‹Are you sure you won't change your mind?›

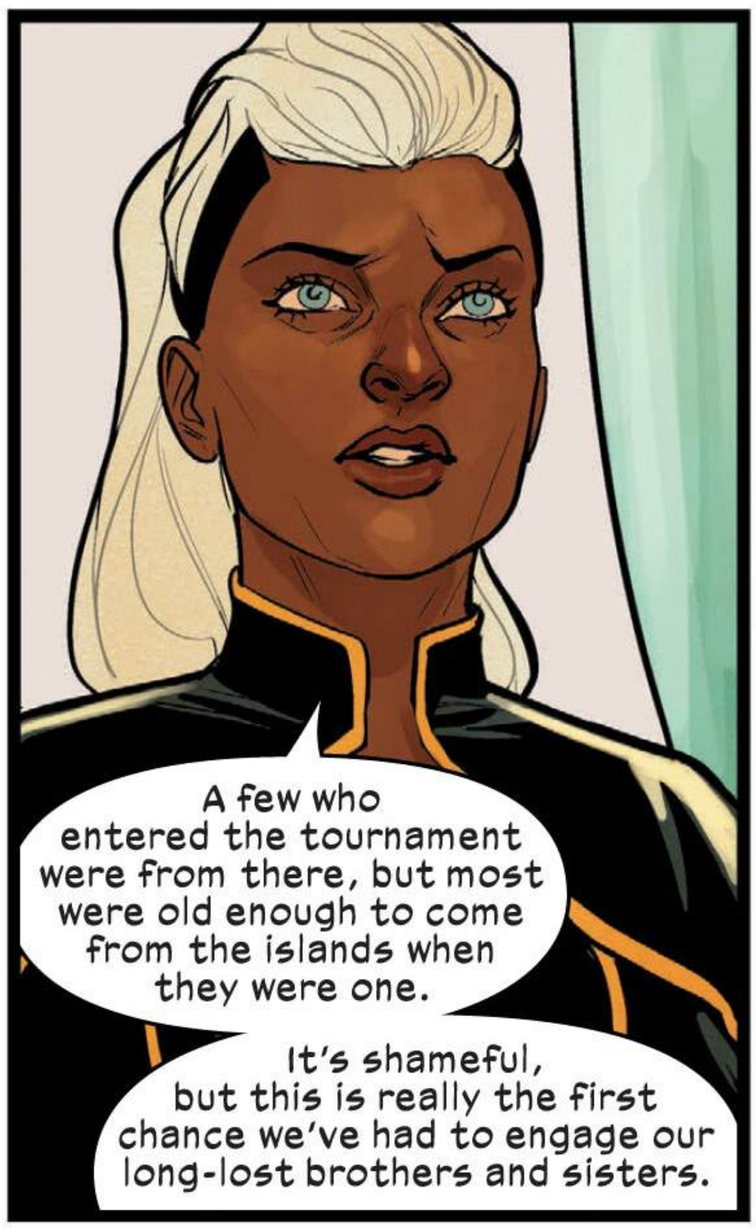

[illegible]

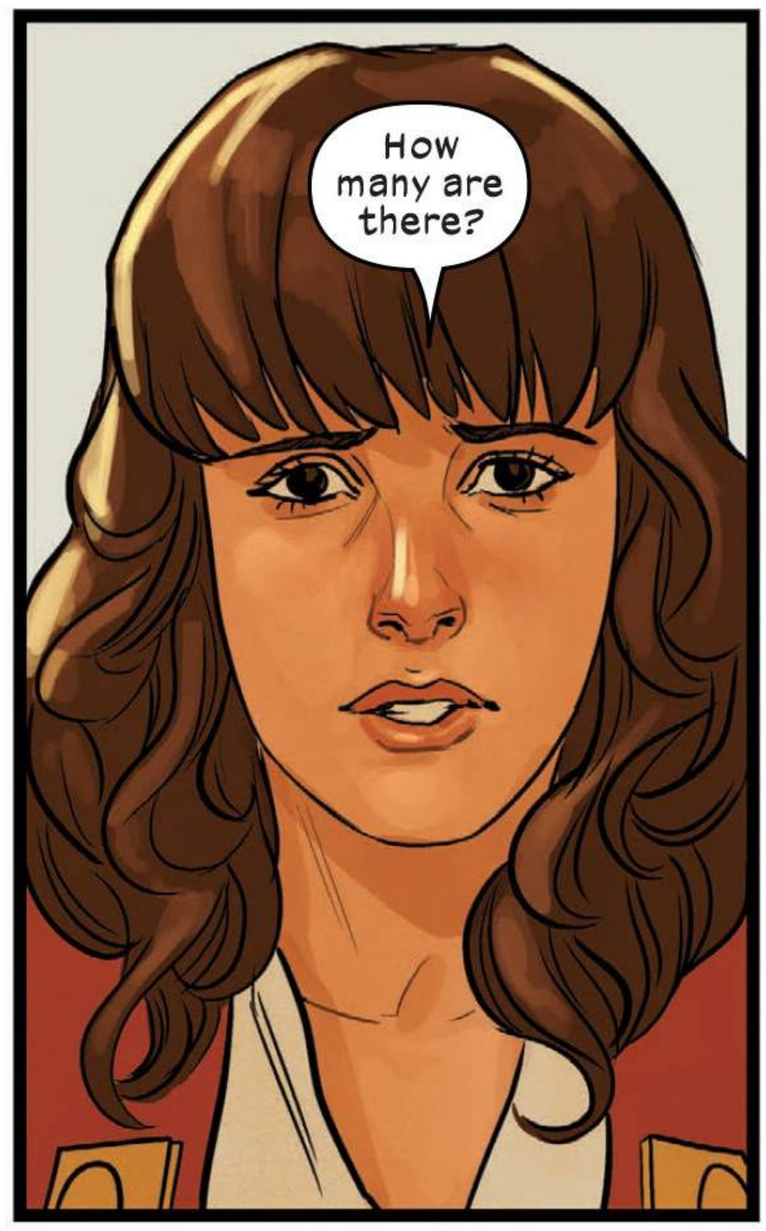
He says it's not really a problem on our end, sir. It's the other island and its intractability.
I really can't stress how different they sound. I think it might extend to all of them as well.


Who?

The mutants on Arakko.

*Ach.* So easily forgotten when you've never matched a name to a face.
There's virtually no reference to them in any of the reports we've seen...


A few who entered the tournament were from there, but most were old enough to come from the islands when they were one.
It's shameful, but this is really the first chance we've had to engage our long-lost brothers and sisters.


How many are there?

That's something I did find out when they were talking.
It seems there are about twenty times as many mutants on Arakko as there are here.

So many...

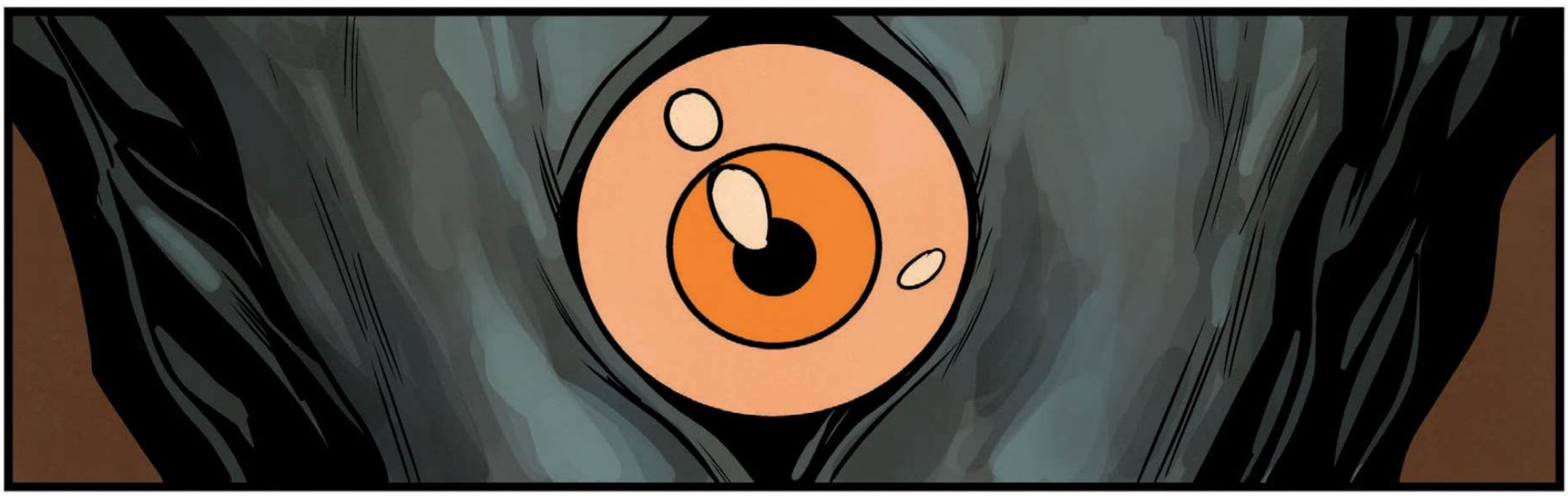
That's a problem well beyond two islands talking to each other.
What are we going to do with all of them?

Well...

"...that feels like an entirely different conversation than this one.

"Doesn't it?"

Later.
Arakko.

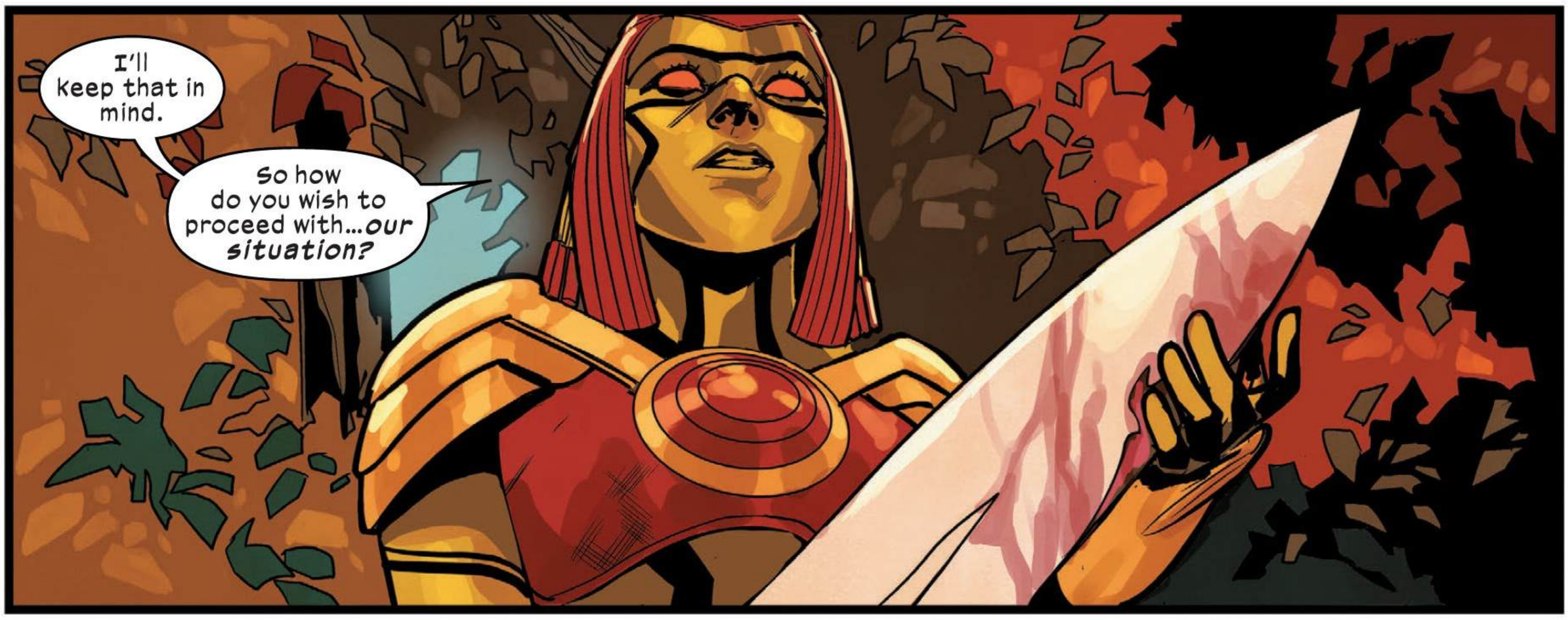


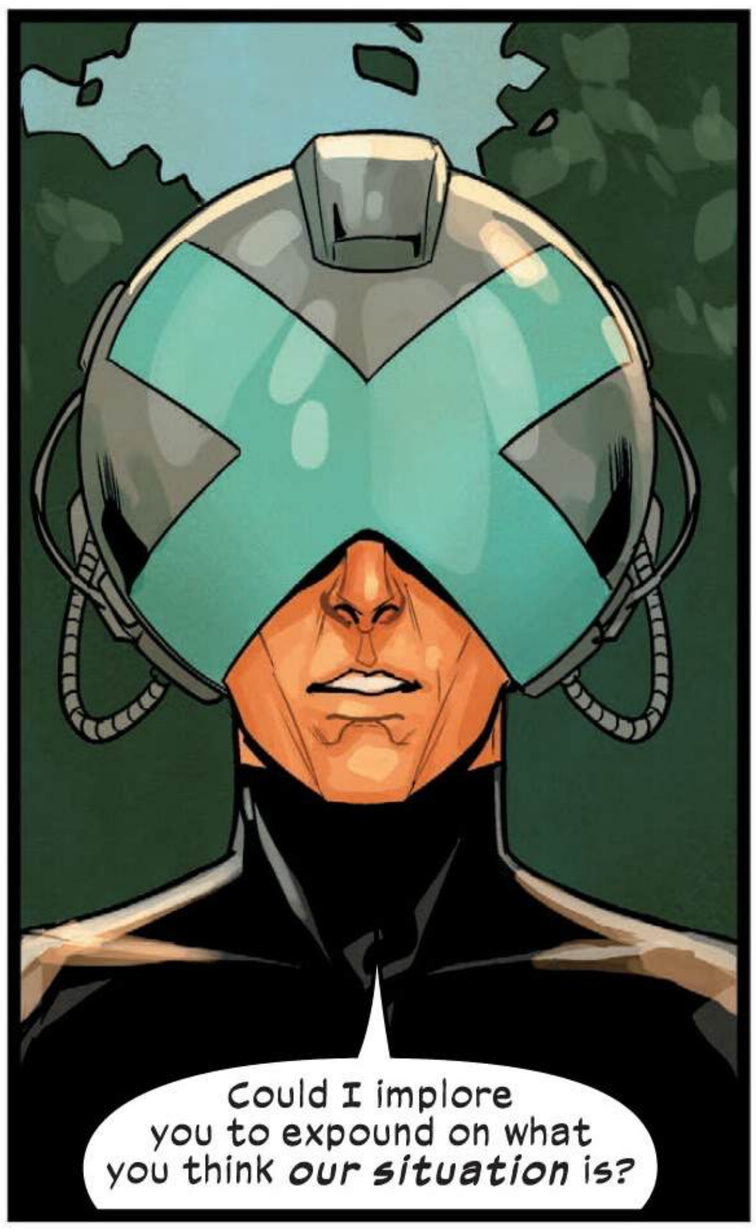
CCHH-THUNK

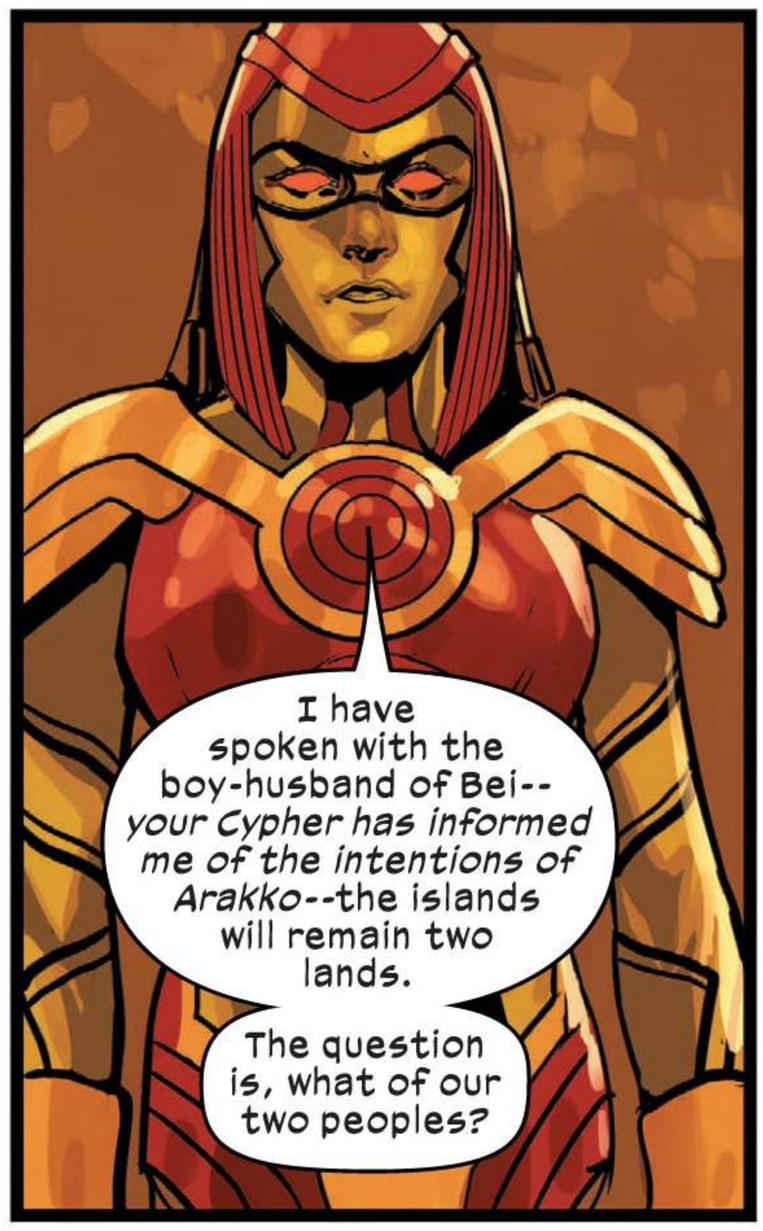
I assume you don't know much of the creatures of Amenth.
You have to root them out entirely. These... demons...reproduce asexually, and if you leave one alive, in a month it will have bred an entire pack.

This is how the fallen world was. Yes, everything can kill you, but any apathy would kill you just as surely as tooth and claw.
So we make sure, *understand?* ***Leave no enemy alive. Ever.***

***Understood.*** You can never be too careful, I always say. Charles here, however, is a *hopeless romantic.*
It's unfortunate, I know. He's quick to trust and gives a wide berth.


I'll keep that in mind.
So how do you wish to proceed with...***our situation?***


Could I implore you to expound on what you think *our situation* is?


I have spoken with the boy-husband of Bei--*your Cypher has informed me of the intentions of Arakko*--the islands will remain two lands.
The question is, what of our two peoples?

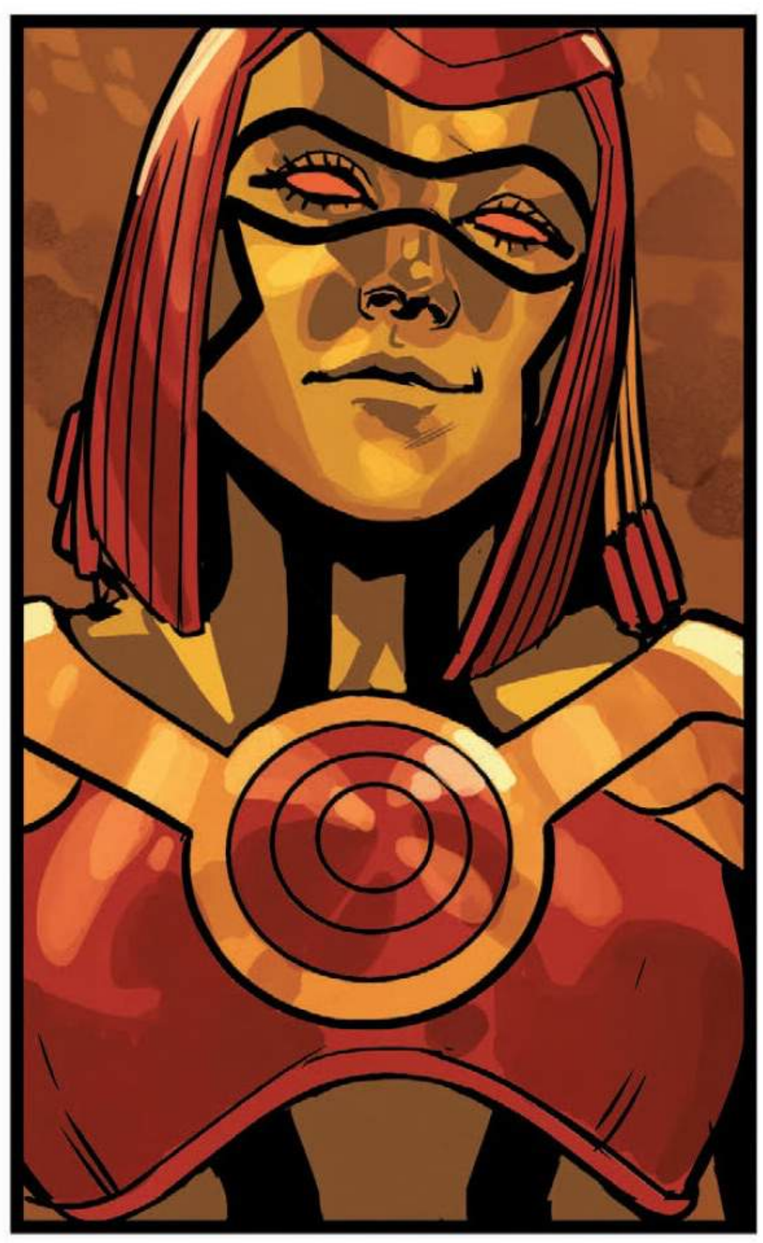
*Ah. Of course.* But before we get into that, we brought you a gift. ***A gateway flower.***
It will enable you to travel from Arakko to Krakoa without having to cross the water.

To ***ease*** our travel.
For... ***comfort.***

Yes. As to the other, do you have a proposal? Intentions beyond peace or some kind of unification?
We were hoping for a coalition or to offer some kind of shared power structure between us.

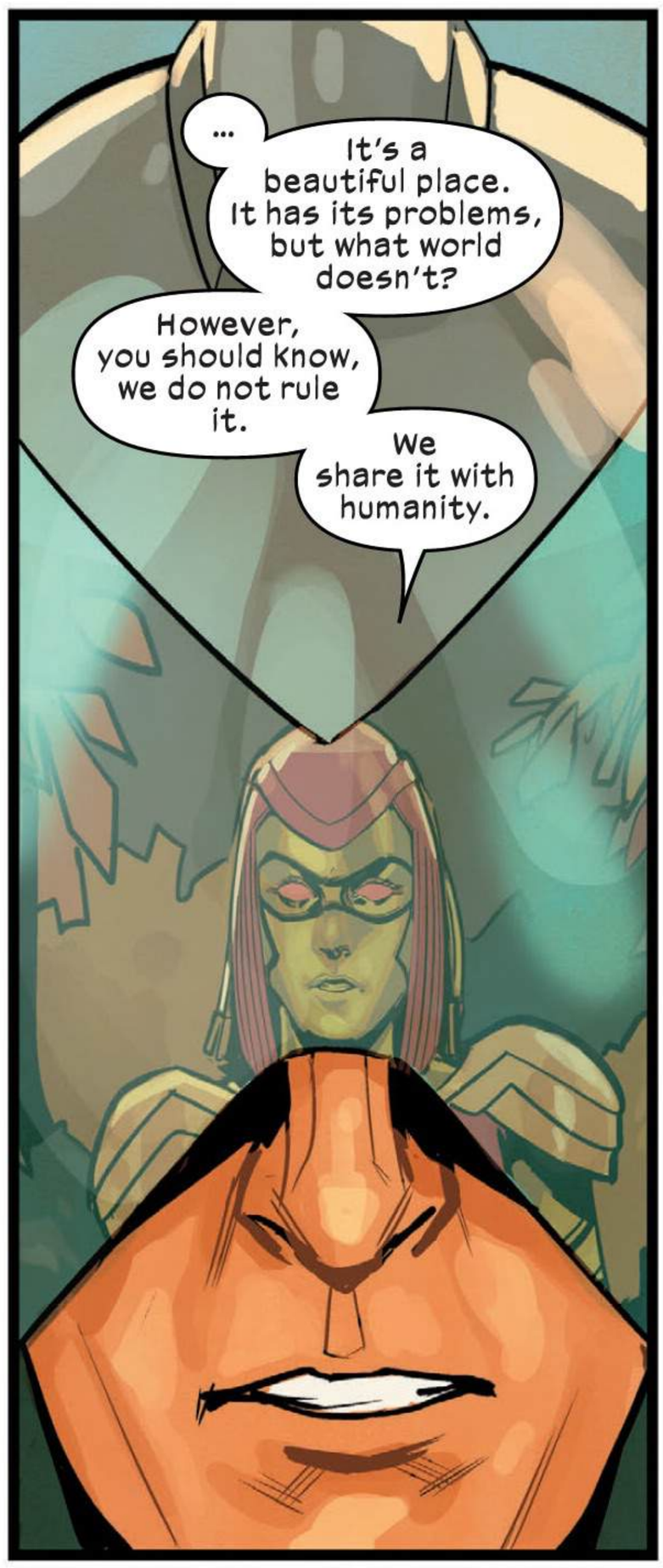
The ***Great Ring*** of Arakko is the government here. And beyond the fallow years, it has been so for thousands of years. *What of yours?*

It's called the Quiet Council. It's a noble body full of wise leaders who will rule for thousands of years and beyond.



I see through you, mutant. All the way to the truth.
You are ***children*** running a ***child government.***

Which, of course, is not necessarily a bad thing...just *inexperienced* and prone to bearing fruit of *that tree.*
Why don't you tell me of this world you rule? Tell me of Earth.


...
It's a beautiful place. It has its problems, but what world doesn't?
However, you should know, we do not rule it.
We share it with humanity.

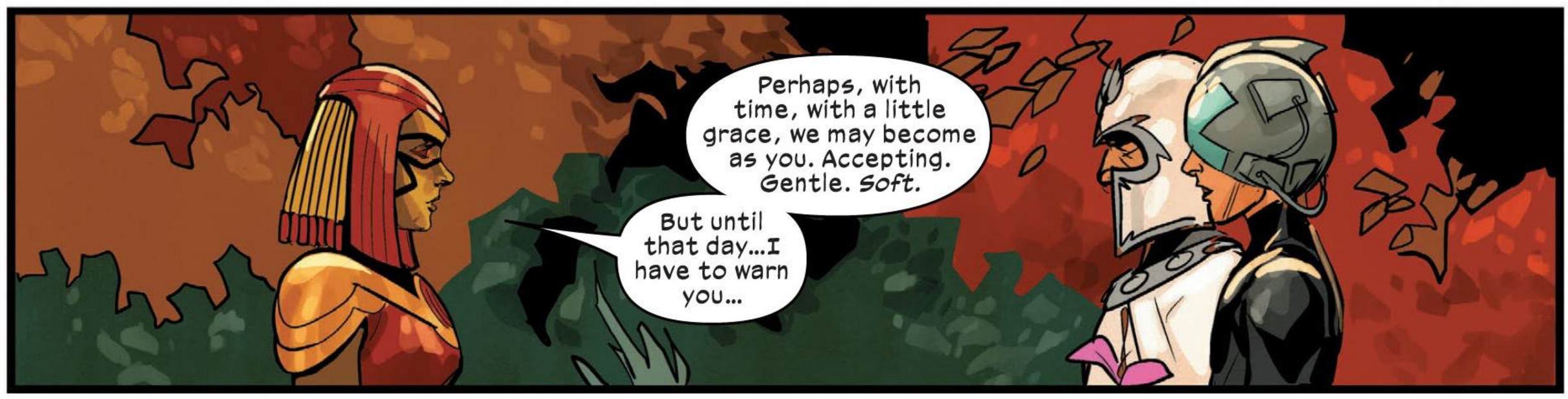
Humanity? Humans? I must confess...I'm surprised that's...a thing that persists here.
Still, thousands of years. Growth, invention, survival... these have a way of sharpening a tool.

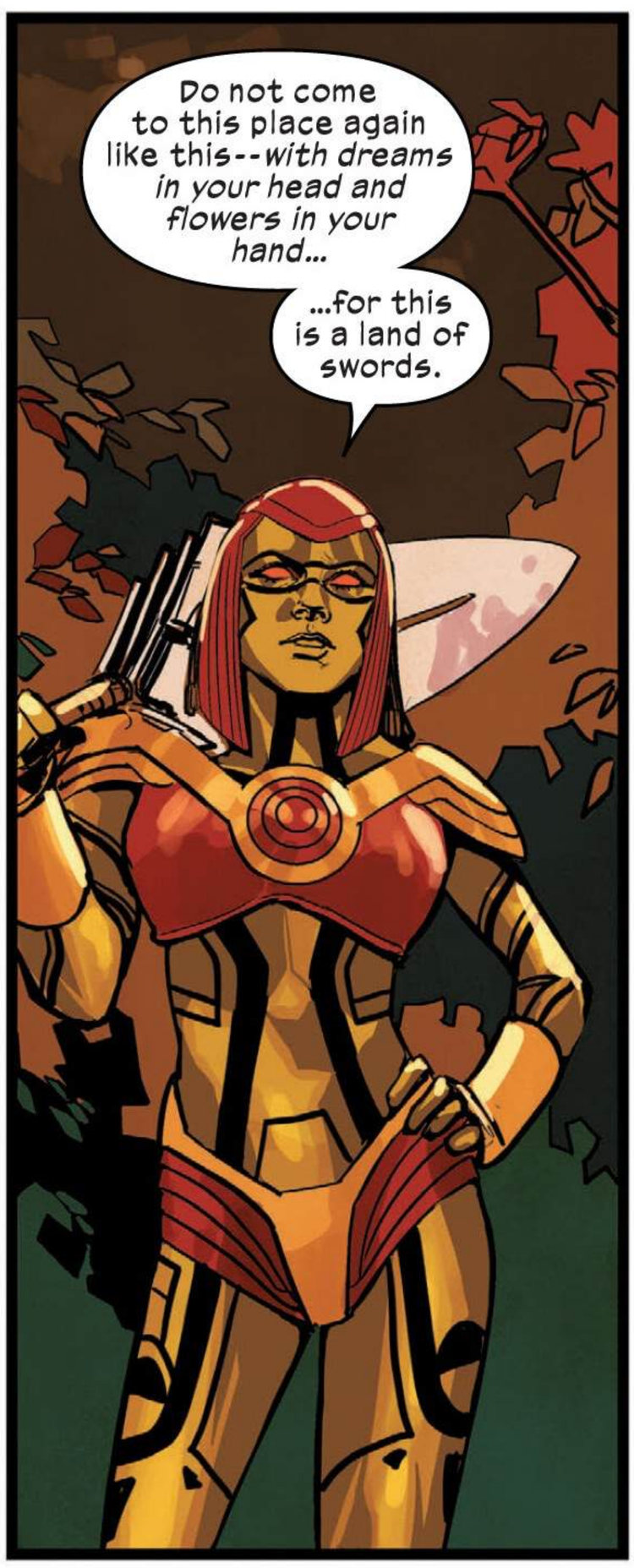
And if you share the world with them, they must be formidable. Worthy of an impasse.

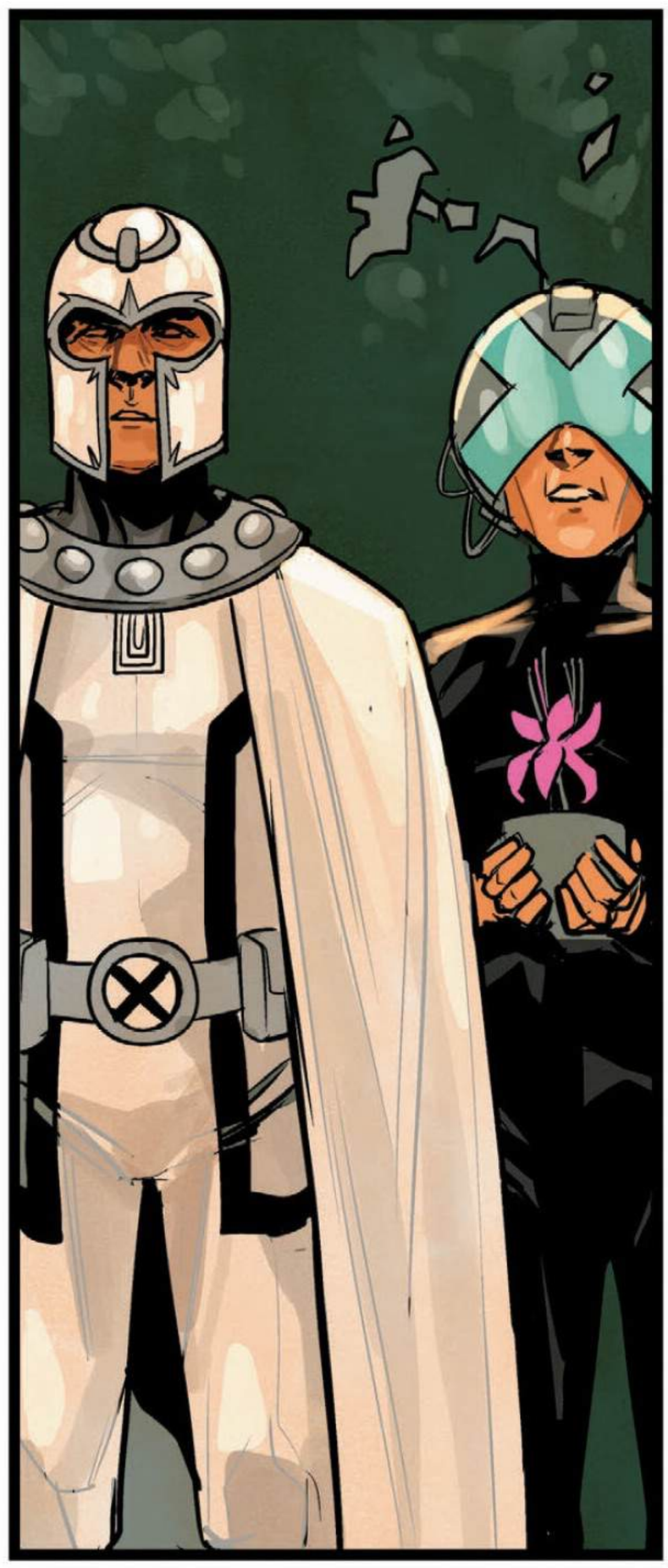
They're just men.

I know that our ways are not yours.
Time has changed our two lands--*changed us*--but I need you to listen to me.

We are a hard people made harder by war.
*We have... no peace in us.*


Perhaps, with time, with a little grace, we may become as you. Accepting. Gentle. *Soft.*
But until that day...I have to warn you...


Do not come to this place again like this--*with dreams in your head and flowers in your hand...*
...for this is a land of swords.



I will take your offer of unity to the Ring.
We will... *consider it.*

# THE GREAT RING OF ARAKKO

## DAWN

[01]....[_____ISCA THE UNBEATEN]
[02]....[_____IDYLL]
[03]....[_____TARN THE UNCARING]

## DUSK

[04]....[____ORA SERRATA THE WITNESS]
[05]....[_____STULGID]
[06]....[_____LODUS LOGOS]

## DAY

[07]....[_____LACTUCA]
[08]....[_____[redacted]]
[09]....[_____SOBUNAR]

## ARAKKO

[10]....[_____ARAKKO]
[11]....[_____REDROOT(OTHERWORLD)]

## NIGHT

[12]....[_____[redacted]]
[13]....[_____[redacted]]
[14]....[_____[redacted]]

[01_03].....[Daw_00]
[04_06].....[Dus_00]
[07_09].....[Day_00]
[Arakko].....[Rdroot]
[10_12].....[Ngt_00]

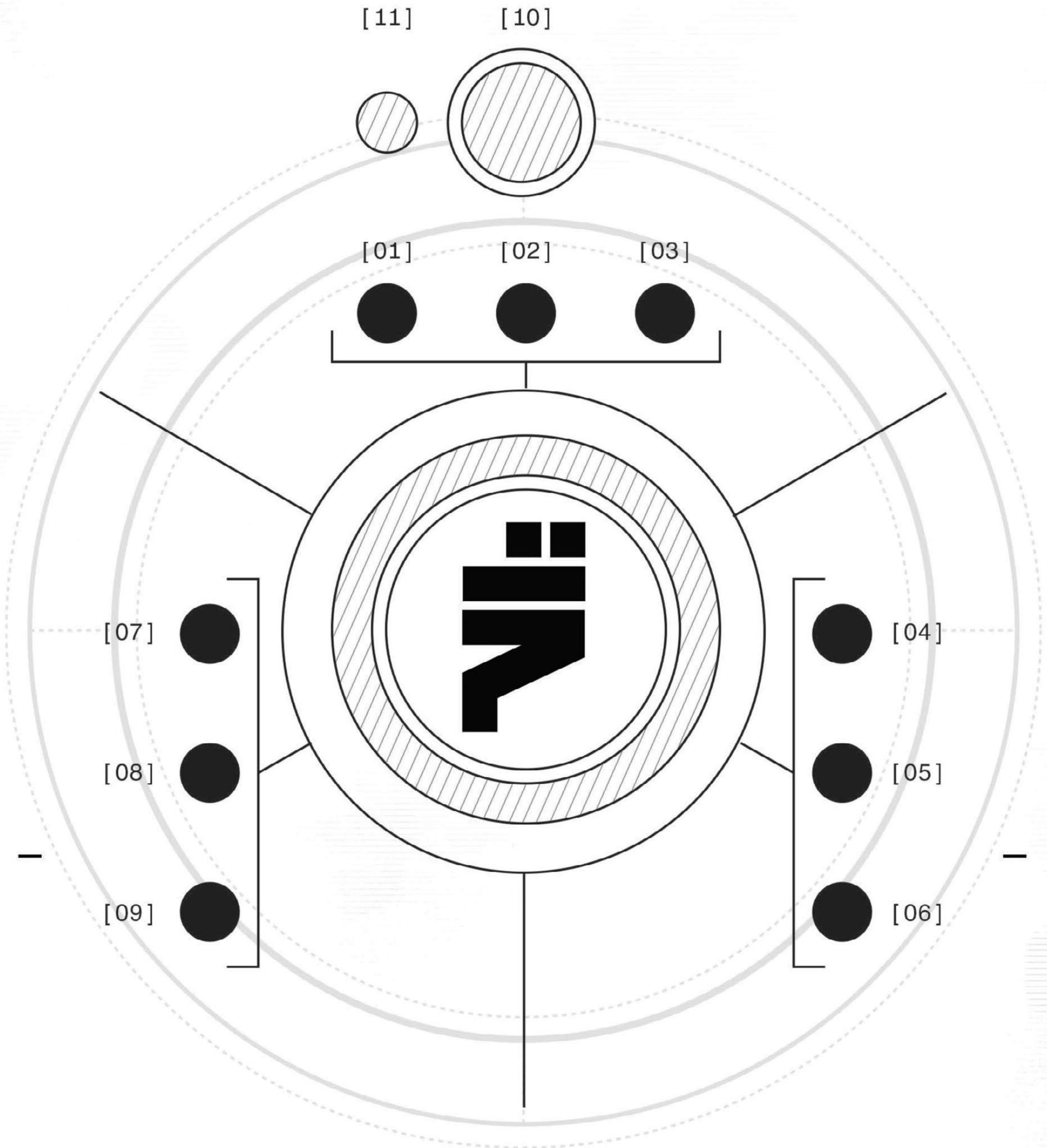
## POWER

There is only one measure of worth on Arakko -- power. To that end, the Great Ring of Arakko is made up of not just the most intelligent and cunning of mutants, but also the most powerful.

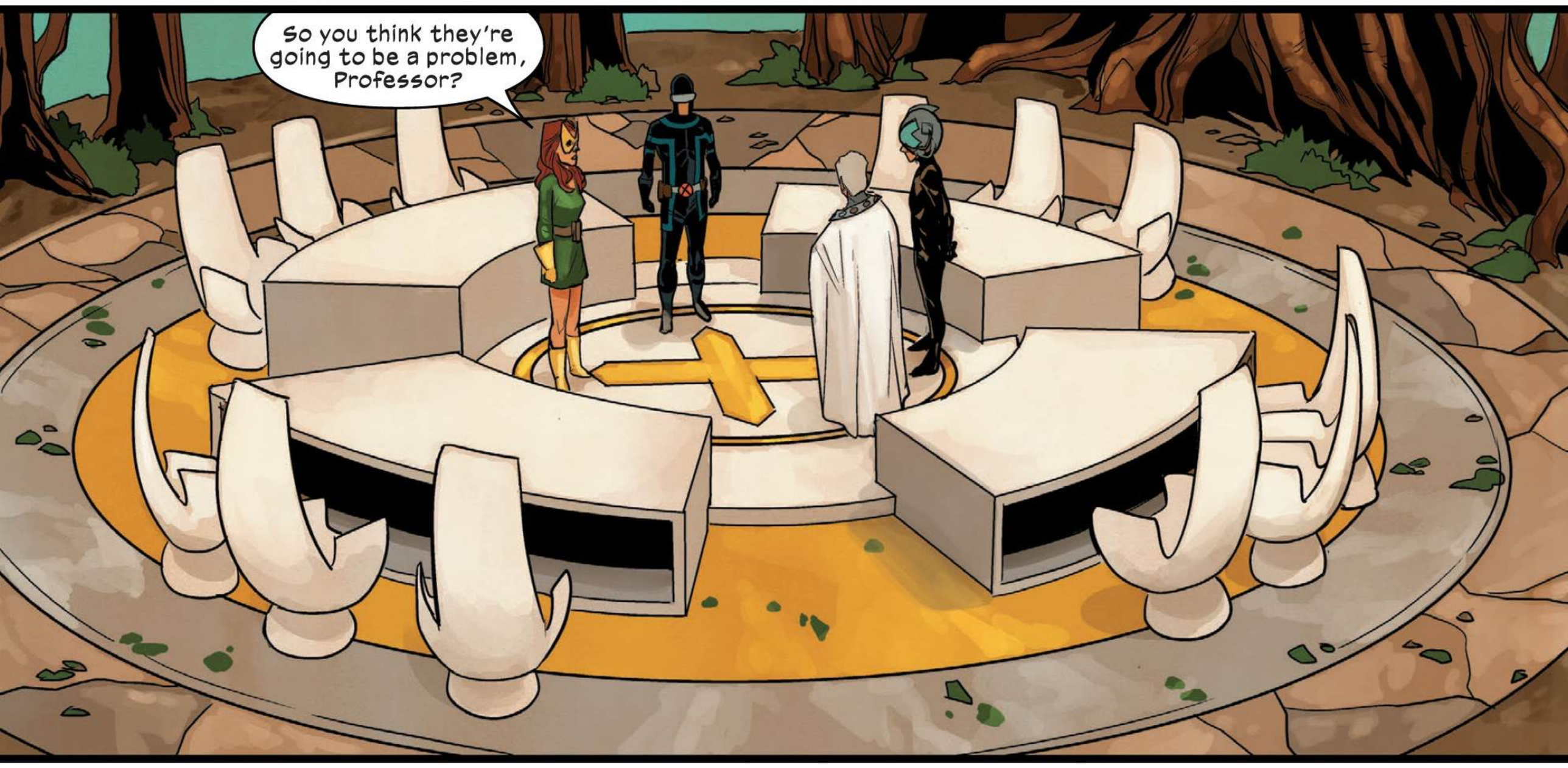
No mutant has ever sat on the Great Ring who was not an Omega-level mutant. Not once. It has never happened -- it never will.

[NOTE: While the Great Ring only has nine recognized seats, there has always been rumor of three more seats apart from the Ring itself. These 'Night' seats, both in makeup and purpose, remain a mystery.]

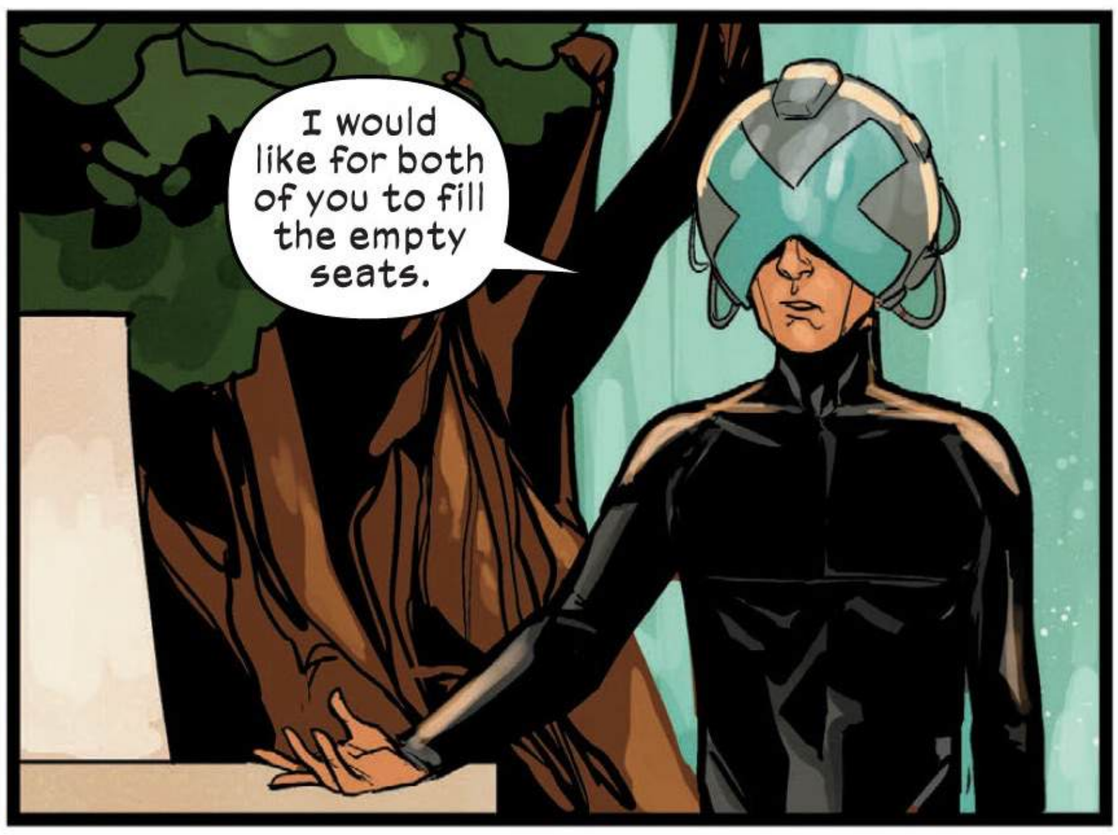
[00.Strength.....0]
[00.....0]

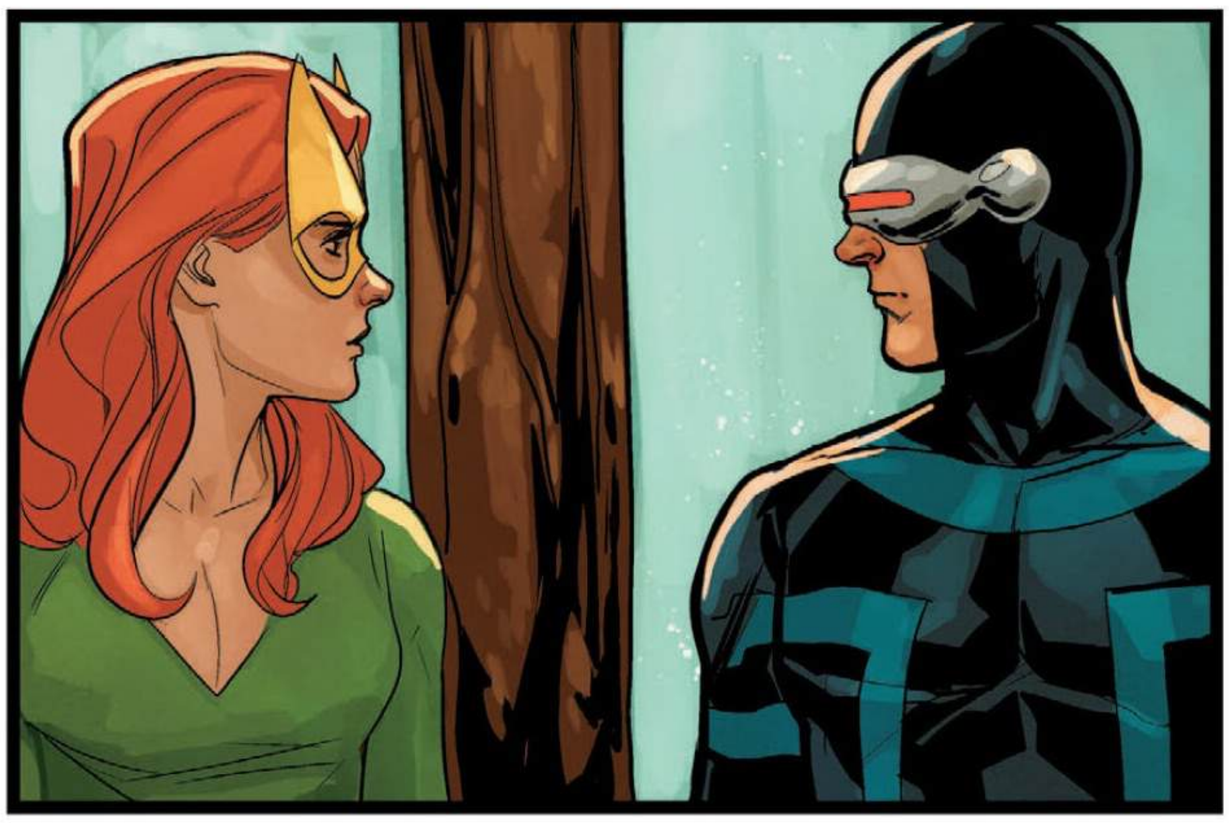


Later.
Krakoa.


So you think they're going to be a problem, Professor?

What I think is that we will need to be at our strongest to weather these uncertain times.
With your resignation and Apocalypse's prolonged--*possibly permanent*--absence, there are two open seats on the Quiet Council.
There will have to be a vote, of course, but we will have the numbers to push it through.
Jean, your reclamation should be a formality. Scott, your reputation should make yours one as well.


I would like for both of you to fill the empty seats.

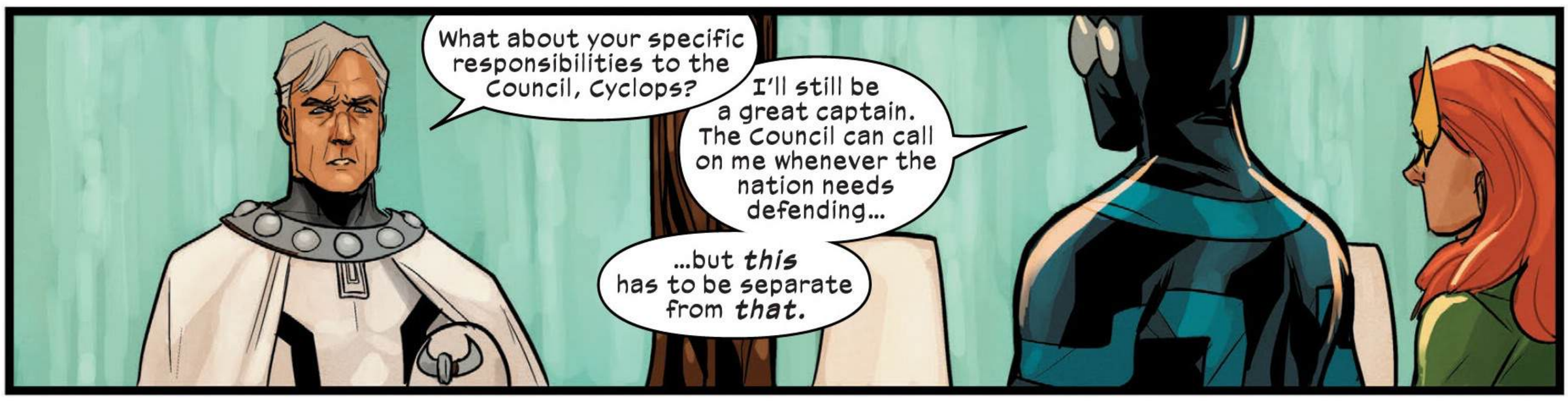


...
NO.
Thank you, sir.
But I can't either.

Why not?

Because we feel like we have something more important to do now.
*The X-Men.* If there's one thing that Scott and I have learned through the beginning of our great Krakoan experiment, *it's this...*

The people of our nation need to feel like someone is acting on their behalf. Not deciding what's best for them--*not deciding what is and is not in their best interest*--but someone who fights for them.
And that's us.


What about your specific responsibilities to the Council, Cyclops?
I'll still be a great captain. The Council can call on me whenever the nation needs defending...
...but *this* has to be separate from *that.*

I can tell...there's no talking either of you out of this. *Is there?*

Have you decided who is going to be on your team?

I could always handpick a team that could get the job done, but...

...that too *feels* wrong.

So what are you planning to do?

[0.01__XME]
[0.01__HFG]

# ELECTION

[file].....[234.76108]

# OF THE X-MEN

**PARTY AFFILIATIONS**

Akademos Habitat.....Eligible
House of M.....Eligible
Hellfire.....Eligible
Bar Sinister.....Eligible
Quiet Council.....Not eligible
Wild Hunt.....Eligible
Arakkii Pillar.....Eligible

**FOR THE PEOPLE**

The X-Men are the heroes of Krakoa. For the people, made up of the mutants of our great nation.

In the coming days, we will announce the dates of our annual X-Men election and will be accepting nominations for representatives. This will be followed by a formal vote and then an unveiling of your team at the first Hellfire Gala.

[FREE_____00.00]
[FAIR_____00.0X]

LEINIL CHO

# Empty Nest

# 19

"The *supercluster* of galaxies that make up our sector of this universal quadrant are in ***turmoil.***
"For thousands--*tens of thousands*--of years, the one thing that outlasted wars, invasions, annihilation events and celestial disruptions was what held most of these ancient societies together.
"*Commerce. Trade.* ***Wealth.***
"Warlike or savage, ancient or cultured, the great civilizations of this supercluster always maintained a *formal* or *informal* network of ***interconnectedness.***
"Either by banking guilds, a unified credit system or black markets, the great economic balance that propped up all society remained intact.
"*Until now.*

"Whether Shi'ar or Brood, Kree or Skrull, Wraith or Kymellian...
"...along with all galactic currency, worlds are collapsing...and are only kept in line by the might of our Praetor.
"These are *not yet* the ***black days*** of ***end-times,*** *but the sun is setting...*
"...and we have a new regent on the throne here in the Shi'ar Empire.
"Like all new monarchs, this is a particularly vulnerable time for ***Xandra.***
"Court politics and imperial machinations were bad enough, *but now...*
"...our majestrix in waiting has ***disappeared.***"

*Was he correct?*

Well, we do have a certain quality, and, frankly, we're in a *saving-the-day* kind of ***mood.***

One hour later.
Chandilar. Throneworld of the Shi'ar Empire.
Also, home to some New Mutants.
Hey, Izzy. We're here.
Put us to work.
Wow. That was fast.
Let me tell the boys we're headed to the palace, and we'll get going.

## [.....] [ BOBBY + SAM PRESENT: HOME ALONE TWO ]



**SUNSPOT:** Hey, where did everyone go?

**CANNONBALL:** They took off for the palace.

**SUNSPOT:** What? Without us? What the heck, man?

**CANNONBALL:** They were in a hurry. And you, my best friend in the whole universe, were busy taking a bath. Who does that anyway? A bath, in the middle of day.

**SUNSPOT:** First off, I will not apologize for my hygiene, Sam. Just because one of us treats is body like a trash can doesn't mean we both should. And second, my lady makes me do it because she has a very sensitive nose and doesn't like, and I quote, Earth smells. Plus, they're relaxing and I just really like them.

**CANNONBALL:** Well, you do smell nice.

**SUNSPOT:** Thank you. This is what a super hero should smell like. And speaking of super heroes, why did those idiots leave behind the two greatest super heroes of all time, as, apparently, super hero things needed doing?

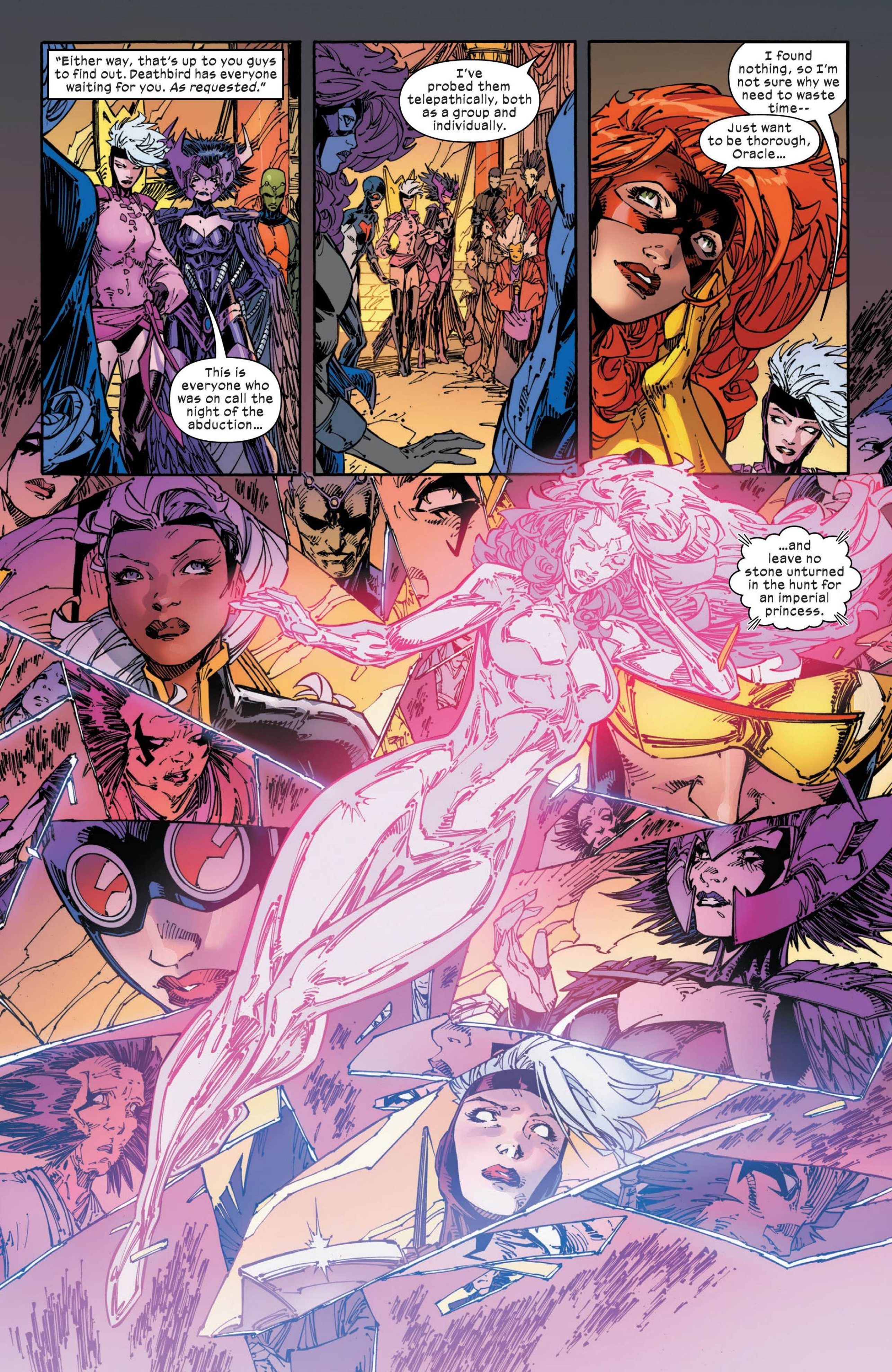
**CANNONBALL:** Oh, I'm babysitting the kid. After all, I'm not just a super hero, Bobby, I'm a super hero dad.

**SUNSPOT:** Listen, Sam, we've talked about this before. Our partnership transcends the societal norms of what is and is not expected of normal dudes. Did I complain when you got married? No I did not. Did I complain when you had the kid? Of course not. I'm the godfather to that kick ass little mutant. Couldn't be happier. All I asked, and you agreed it's not asking too much, was that we maintain the incredible level of communication we've developed over the years. So when I talk, you know what I'm really saying. And when you talk, I promise to always listen. Always.

**CANNONBALL:** Look, Bobby, you know that --

**SUNSPOT:** Hold that thought, Sam. I'm getting a call on my spacephone. It's my money dudes, so I need to take this.

The Imperial Palace.
"So what do we know?"
Deathbird is keeping things locked down tight, but from what I understand, Xandra disappeared sometime last night.
She was in the royal wing-- *the guards who were on duty were found dead--* but security footage doesn't show that anyone entered or exited the room.
That could either mean an inside job or that whoever this was has the technical prowess to bypass the best security the empire has to offer.
What about the staff?
Normally? *Vetted.* ***Seriously vetted.***
But I dunno... desperate times lead to desperate people doing things they normally wouldn't...


"Either way, that's up to you guys to find out. Deathbird has everyone waiting for you. *As requested.*"
This is everyone who was on call the night of the abduction...
I've probed them telepathically, both as a group and individually.
I found nothing, so I'm not sure why we need to waste time--
Just want to be thorough, Oracle...
...and leave no stone unturned in the hunt for an imperial princess.

So, in situations like these, I've often found it effective to not look for what someone is thinking...

...but to focus in on an absence of certain thoughts entirely. *See the mask for what it is.*

*That one.*

Death to Xandra!
Death to all tyrants!
EEEEEEE!
Was that me or you?
Hard to tell.
Deathbird. Look. The assassin's disguise is fading.
It's a *Stygian*. Their innate resistance to telepathy explains how she got past us. As for why, well...
Yes.
It's all becoming clear to me.

The catacombs of Chandilar.
Hoor'Osk. Bettlyze Prime. Gal-Durann. All of these heavy-gravity worlds, the empire gave to us.
Mine them, the Shi'ar said. Make the empire rich, and the empire will provide for your people.
Where are the Shi'ar now, I ask?
Where is their money and the gratitude it buys?
Gone with the *great collapse.*
I'm sorry, they say...*no one could have seen this coming.*
We regret that your people starve...even more, we regret that there's nothing we can do.
We should be *grateful.* It's not often that the unseen hand of subjugation is revealed...
...and revealed to be that of an entitled child.

Were you born *evil*, ***Xandra Neramani?***
Does your family name-- *and the damned throne that billions have died for*-- taint your entire existence?
You have to know someone will come for me.
Do you see this weapon I hold, child?
It is the great Maul of Stygia, and with it, I executed every member of our puppet Shi'ar government.
My own brother-- *my own blood*--tasted this metal. For I am ***justice*** for the people. ***I am Urr.***
You're a ***monster.***
I am what the universe made me.
I am what the Shi'ar made me.
And the bill has come due, little empress. ***Time to pay.***

The assassin's mind was like a fog... but it was clear that a deep-seeded anti-imperial sentiment was there.

This financial collapse must have made it worse, but I'm sure it wasn't that hard to position their people into place for something like this.

After all, they clean up after the Shi'ar. They wash their clothes. They make their food.

*This*...has probably been a long time coming.

How many of them are there?

No idea. Again, it was like a soup in there.

All right. Well, I've heard enough.

*What are you doing?*

Making sure we don't get the empress killed.

BE-DOOP

First, we will make an example. We break the throne. Which then breaks the hold the empire has on its vassal worlds.
This begins with a blood sacrifice. *Hold her.*
*Any last words, tyrant?*
I have ruled for less than the blink of an eye, and that short term will almost certainly be defined by the collapse the universe is currently facing.
You have no idea what I would have done--*and I believe I would have done well*--but that doesn't matter to you.
You think you are righteous... ***but this?*** This just makes you a ***murderer.***
So swing true, villain. We children care so very little for dying badly over sins we did not commit.
You cannot guilt us with hell, Your Majesty...
*We are already in it.*

ARGHHH!
Protect the empress, Smasher...
We'll handle the rest.
Is that so?
Is that really what you believe?

ARRGGHHH!
Scott!
There're more of them than we thought. You need to--
Go ahead. I'll take care of this.
So few of you? And for a task well beyond bravery and valor.
We are a desperate people. We are willing to die here today.
Are you?
He's out cold, Ororo.
We need to leave. NOW!

Superguardian, join them if you need to... I can make a run for it. I'll send for help as soon as I'm clear.

That won't be necessary, Your Majesty.

I came *prepared.*

BE-DOOP

Okay, Sam. Send them in.

*Hello, who's this?*

*Bobby?* What the--

*Where's Sam?*

Oh, he's here with the kid. In the other room.

Listen, can this wait? I'm on the other line.

*What?*

You're not going to believe this, but my money guys called and, *woo boy,* there's a fire sale on.

Oh, hey, Izzy. *How goes work?*

***Not now, Sam--*** we're talking about ***money.*** So anyway, I clawed back some of that X-Corp cash, we diversified--*whatever the hell that means*--and now we're buying everything, baby.

***Pennies on the dollar.***

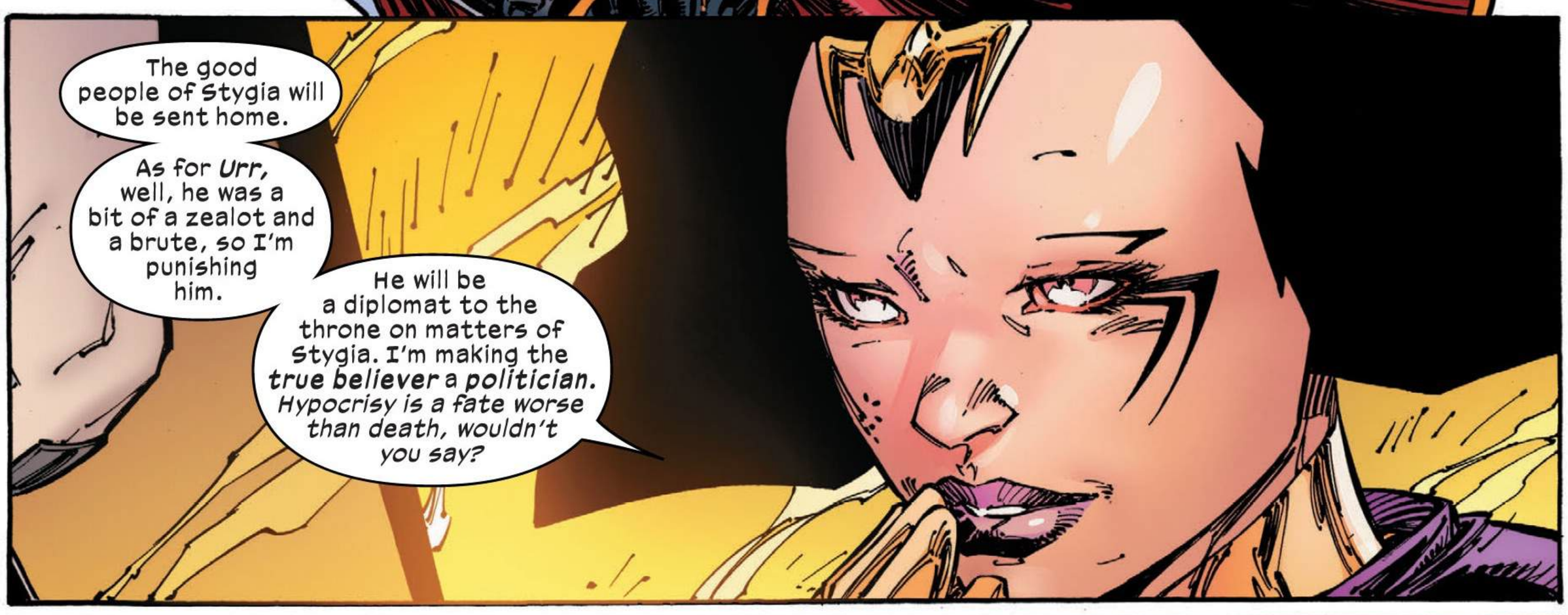
Kinda gross, Bobby.
Hey!
Do you want to start paying rent?
Both of you!
Shut up!
Bobby, to be continued. Sam?
Yes, dear?
This is me telling you to do the thing.
Got it.
Here they come.
BOOP

Look around you. This is how it always ends for tyrants.
Always.
I don't know you...but I do know them and a little of the circumstances that pull at you both.
It begs for grace--this spot you find yourself in--so for you, I have grace...
But in small measure. Stand down.
Never.
Well...she gave you a chance.
SMASH!

You want to replace me one day on the Imperial Guard? You want to be a superguardian?
Well, this is how you do it, guardians! Protect the throne! Protect the empire!
We may all die here today, Empress. But it's a fair price to pay to see the end to Neramani rule.
Wherever tomorrow finds you, priest, remember...
OOUFFFF!
...you were warned.
KRAK-A-THOOOM

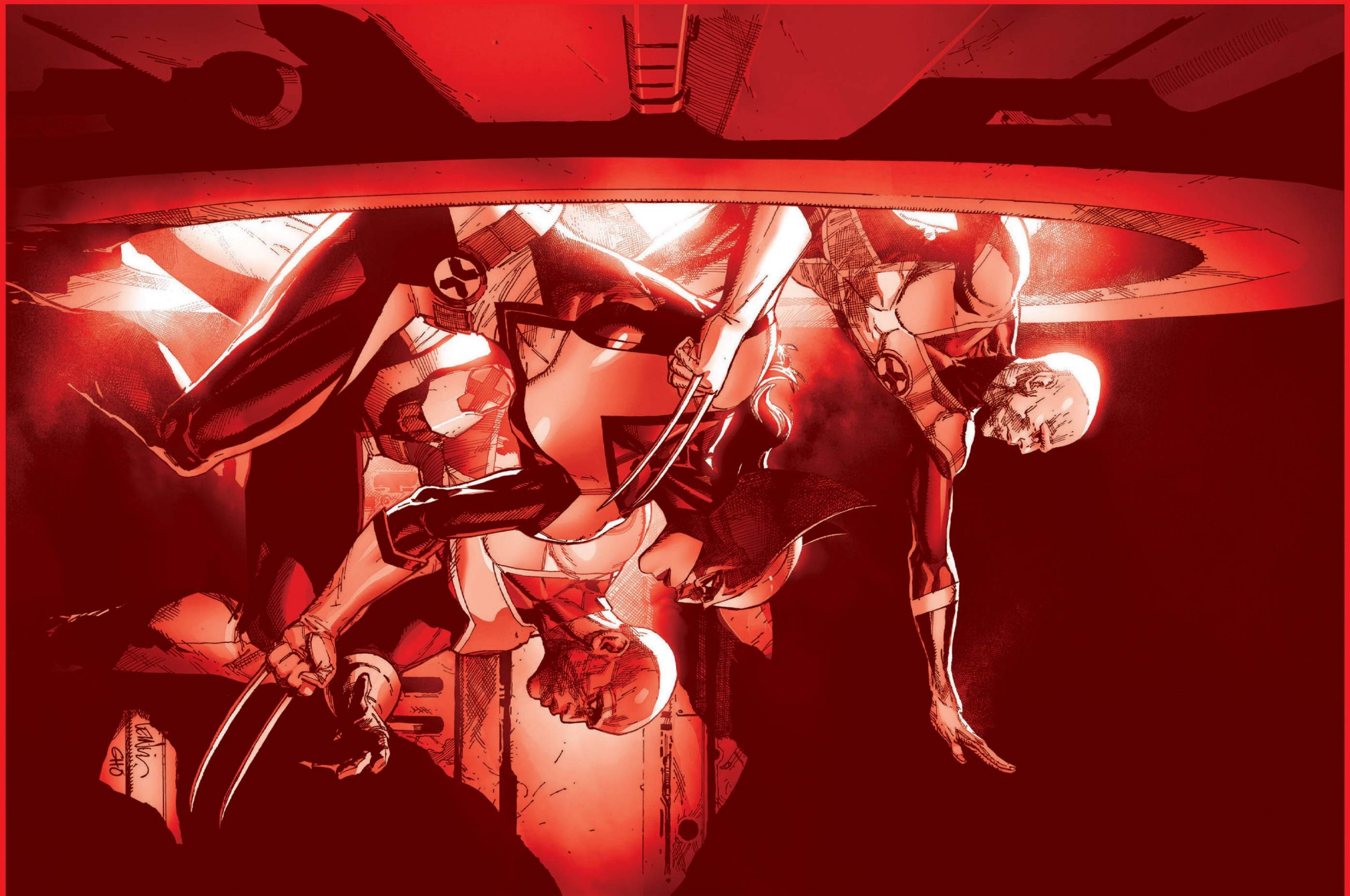
Later.
Congratulations, Your Majesty. You're back where you belong.
With only a slight headache to show for the trouble.
Yes. I have returned...
...but changed, I think. My royal advisor, Deathbird... has *educated* me on how to handle these complicated times.
*In winter,* an iron hand is never a good idea.
And ***weakness*** must not be seen as an ***opportunity.***
To that end, I have... volunteered that the recent good fortune of my inamorato be used to the betterment of the Stygian people.
I'm not happy about it... but I'm also happy for everyone.
*Allegedly.*

And the cleric? And those involved in the plot?


The good people of Stygia will be sent home.
As for *Urr*, well, he was a bit of a zealot and a brute, so I'm punishing him.
He will be a diplomat to the throne on matters of Stygia. I'm making the ***true believer*** a ***politician.*** *Hypocrisy is a fate worse than death, wouldn't you say?*

*As for you,* Storm of Krakoa, vanquisher of a rebellion and friend of the throne...
To you... ***I owe a debt.***

And in the coming days, should you need anything of me...
***...feel free to collect at any time.***

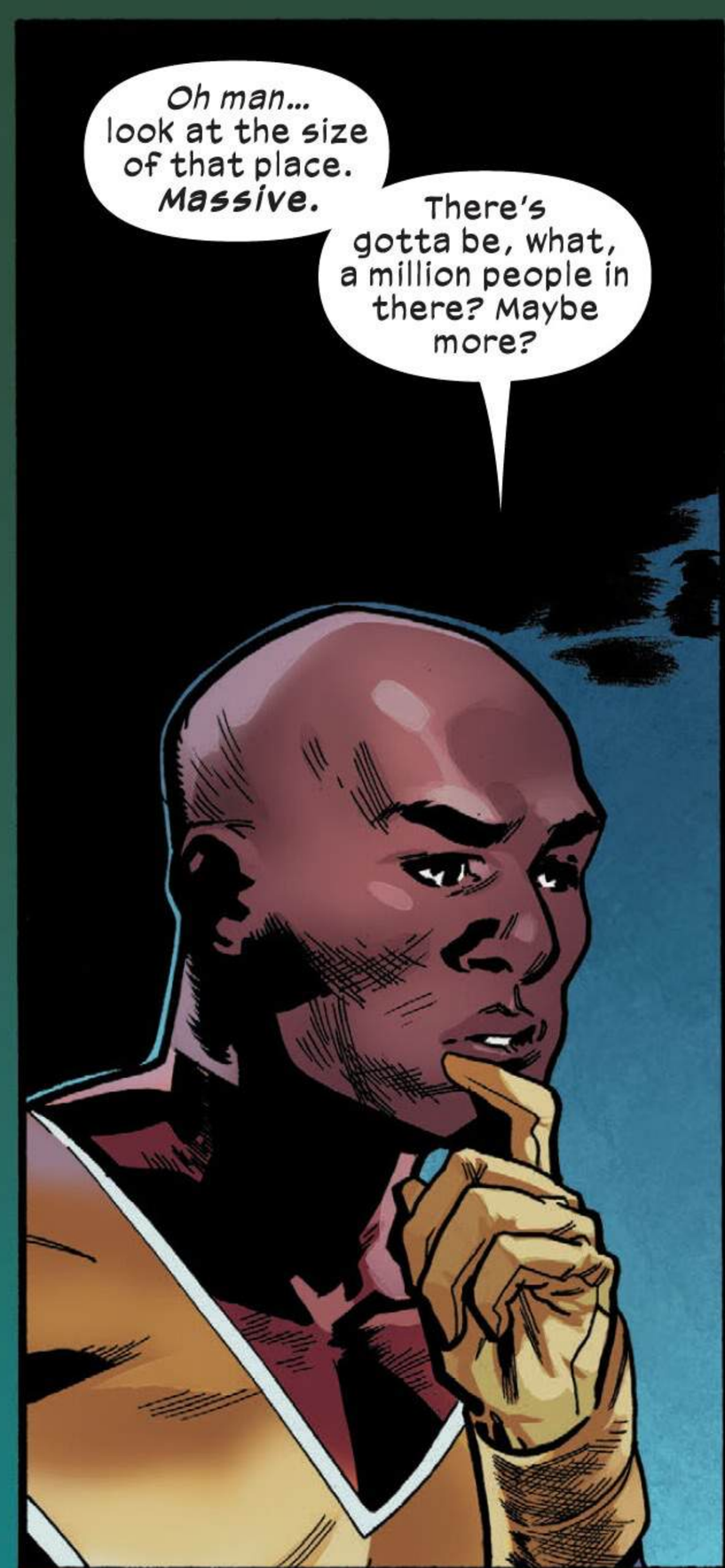


# Inside the Vault

# 20

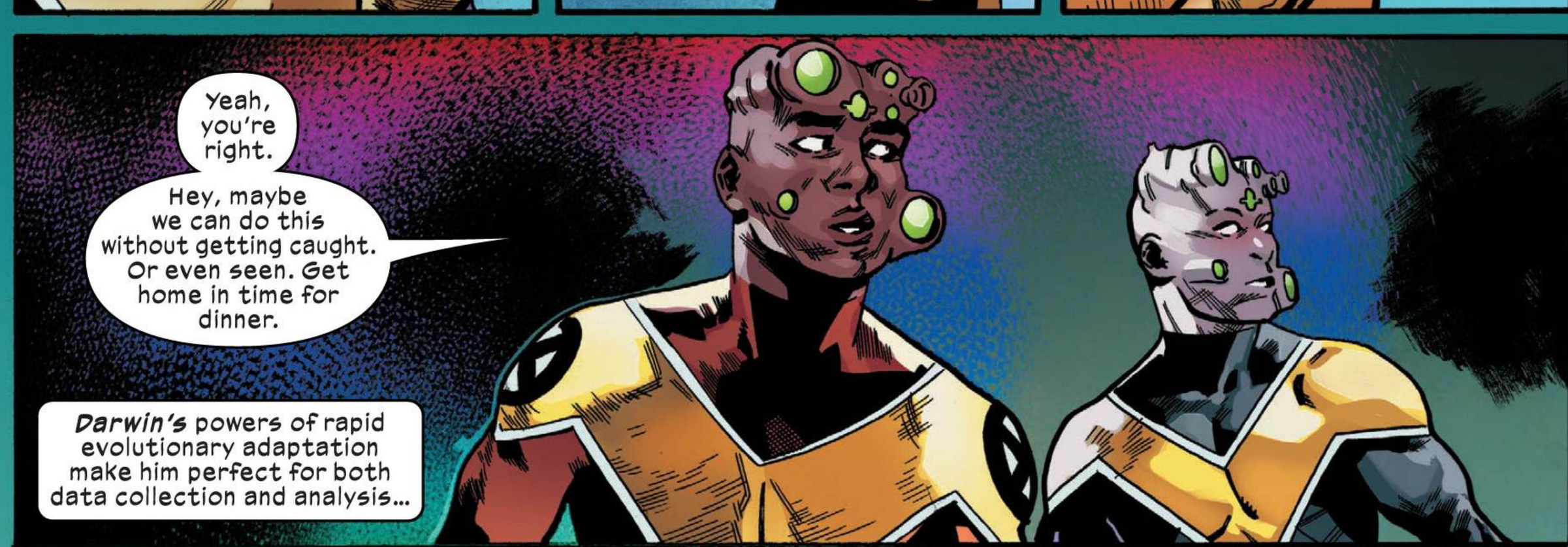
South America. The Vault.
From this point forward, you cannot depend on time to function in any manner resembling normal. It waxes and wanes, like temporal tides.
This is, however, the past.
Day one.
A sense record of events.
With a little help from our fellow mutants, we have successfully breached the external defenses of the Vault and proceeded inside without detection.
Easier than expected, but we'll take the win. As we expect things to go south. And quickly.

Our team is *Darwin*, *Wolverine* and me.
Our objective is to ascertain the threat level and potential weaknesses of the Vault and the full capabilities of what lies within and those of the children.
Good luck, they said before they sent us in here...
I think we're going to need it.


Oh man... look at the size of that place. Massive.
There's gotta be, what, a million people in there? Maybe more?

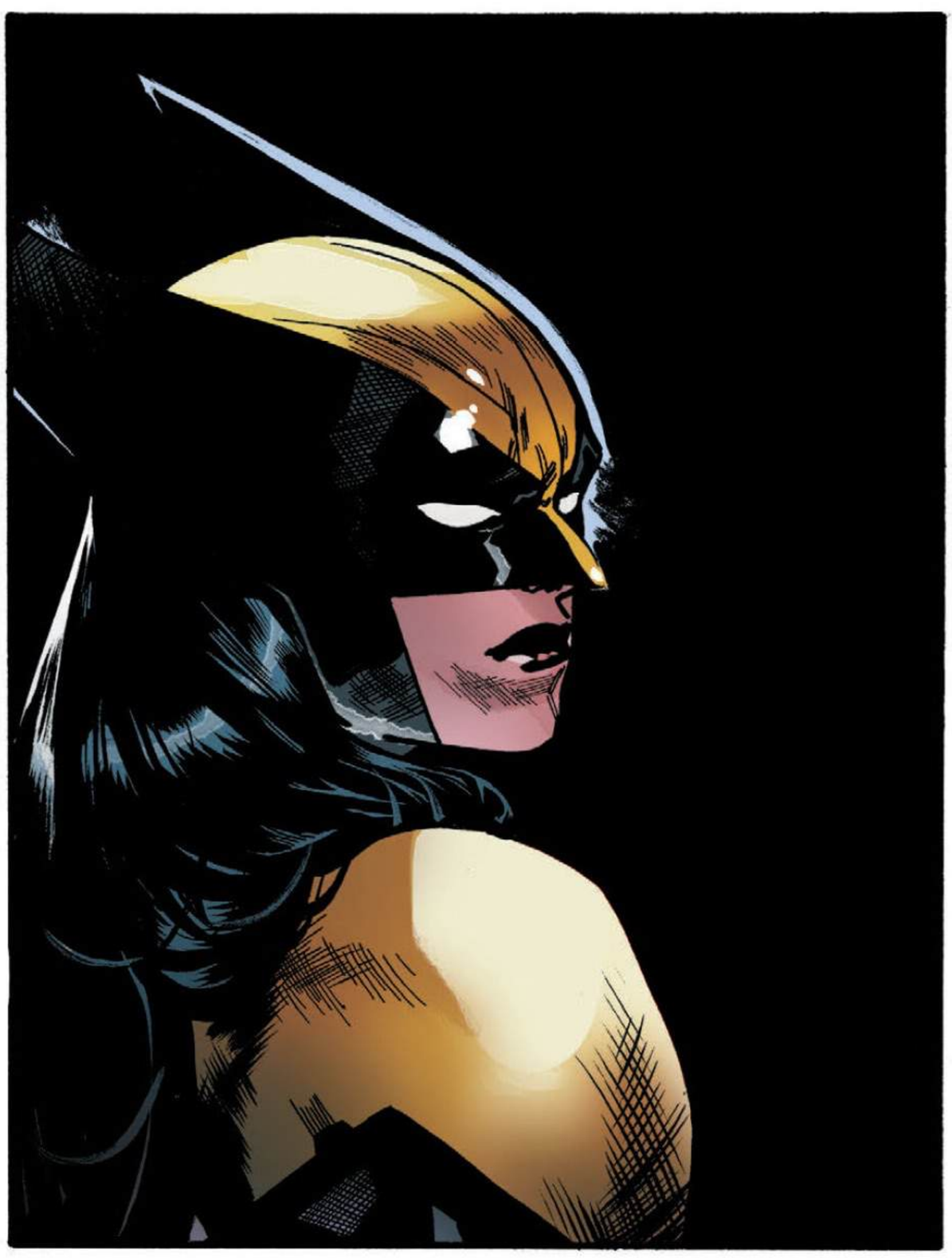
It could certainly hold that. No doubt. But it's pretty unlikely.
Did you read the file? One of the main reasons we're in here is because we just don't know enough about these guys...

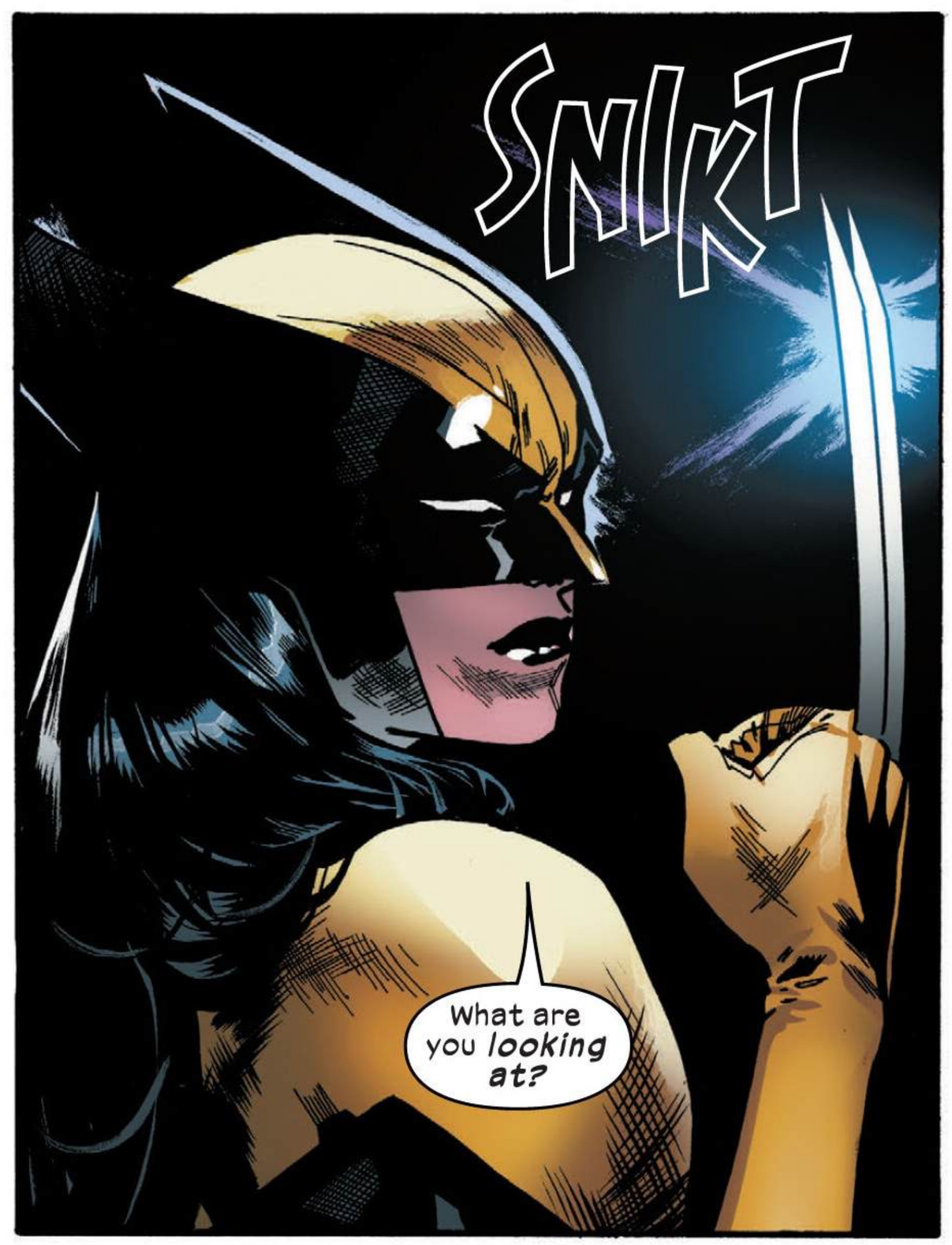
But it's been theorized that--for whatever reason--the Children of the Vault have engaged in strict population control.
Hrmpt. Well... that theory seems sound. There may be a few who don't register a heat signature, but from what I'm seeing, that city is pretty sparsely populated.

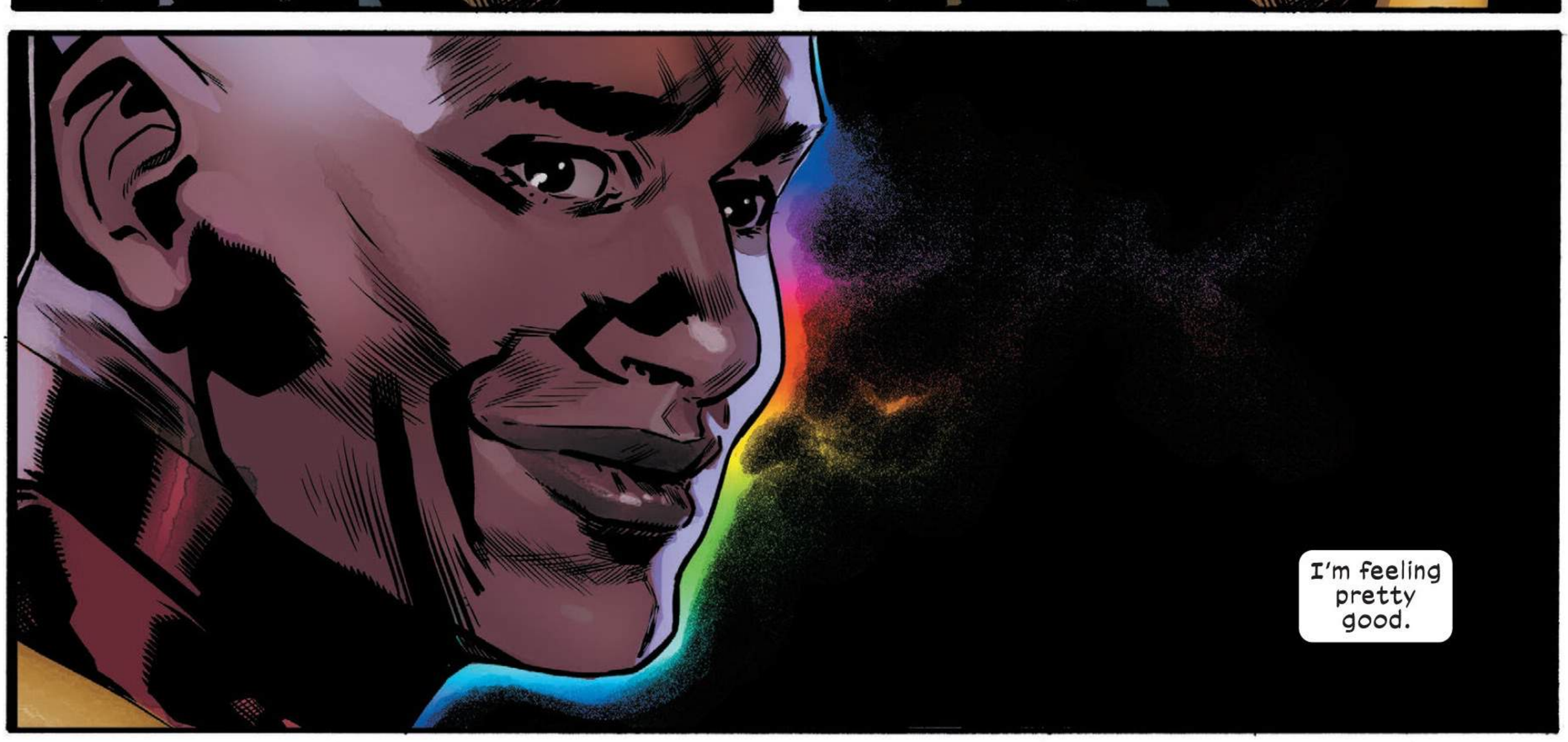

Yeah, you're right.
Hey, maybe we can do this without getting caught. Or even seen. Get home in time for dinner.
Darwin's powers of rapid evolutionary adaptation make him perfect for both data collection and analysis...

...while Wolverine's are essential to our long-term survival. Against both environment and adversary.
Prickly though...
Not gonna happen if the two of you don't keep it down.

And how do I feel about that?




SNIKT
What are you *looking at?*


I'm feeling pretty good.

My powers make me a redundancy--*a literal backup for both*--extra surveillance and survival when needed or extra muscle if that's what's called for.
With any luck, we'll be out of here in a day or two. A week tops.
So here's one for luck...
Going down.
This is *Synch.* Descending into the Vault.
The real mission begins now.

# MEDICAL REPORT



**PATIENT FILE: #14**
RE: Post-resurrection analysis of Synch [Everett Thomas]

—

**ADDENDUM: MANIFESTATION**

As stated in earlier notes: Synch clearly demonstrated a four percent increase in power post-resurrection than what he displayed while undergoing testing at the Massachusetts Academy during his previous life. There were other slight anomalies to his baseline scans, but they were so minuscule compared to his power increase that I wrote them off as fluctuations and focused primarily on the more dominant measurables.

Now, after a series of follow-up scans, it has become obvious that Synch's power no longer has a dormant and active state. Instead, it is clear that while he may not be acquiring powers he is in proximity to, his Synchronistic field is constantly seeking out a live connection to other power sets.

This seemed, at first, to be a potential secondary mutation, but now I think it is going to be a potential reoccurring phenomenon among all resurrected mutants. A mutant husk grown from mutant's DNA is a tabula rasa of mutant powers -- a body that has never been "mutant active." However, the backup that is then placed in the husk is one that has been "mutant active" before, often times for years.

So when that experienced mutant mind activates their powers inside a never-before, powered husk, I believe this "breakthrough" experience -- a first breach of a mutant womb -- enables a mutant to surpass their original power levels and possible native parameters.

In Synch's case, I believe that his adaptability is no longer confined to previous operational limits. This merits further observation.

- Dr. Cecelia Reyes

# AND STEP BACK IN

The Children of the Vault -- a highly evolved and highly dangerous super-powered group developed via exposure to temporal acceleration -- have re-appeared.

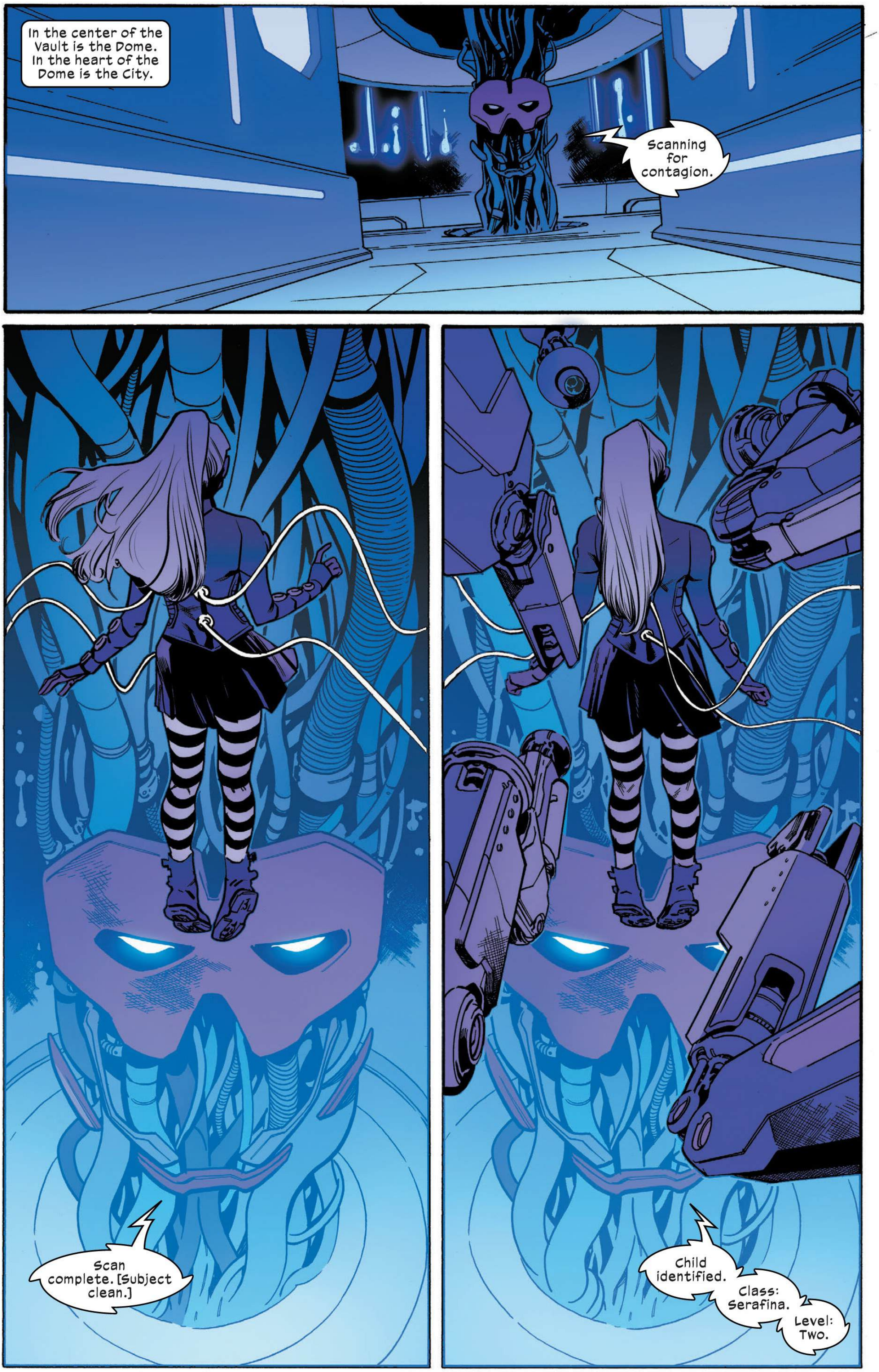
Wolverine, Synch and Darwin entered the Vault to evaluate this threat, knowing only that time flows differently inside.

Everything else remains to be discovered.

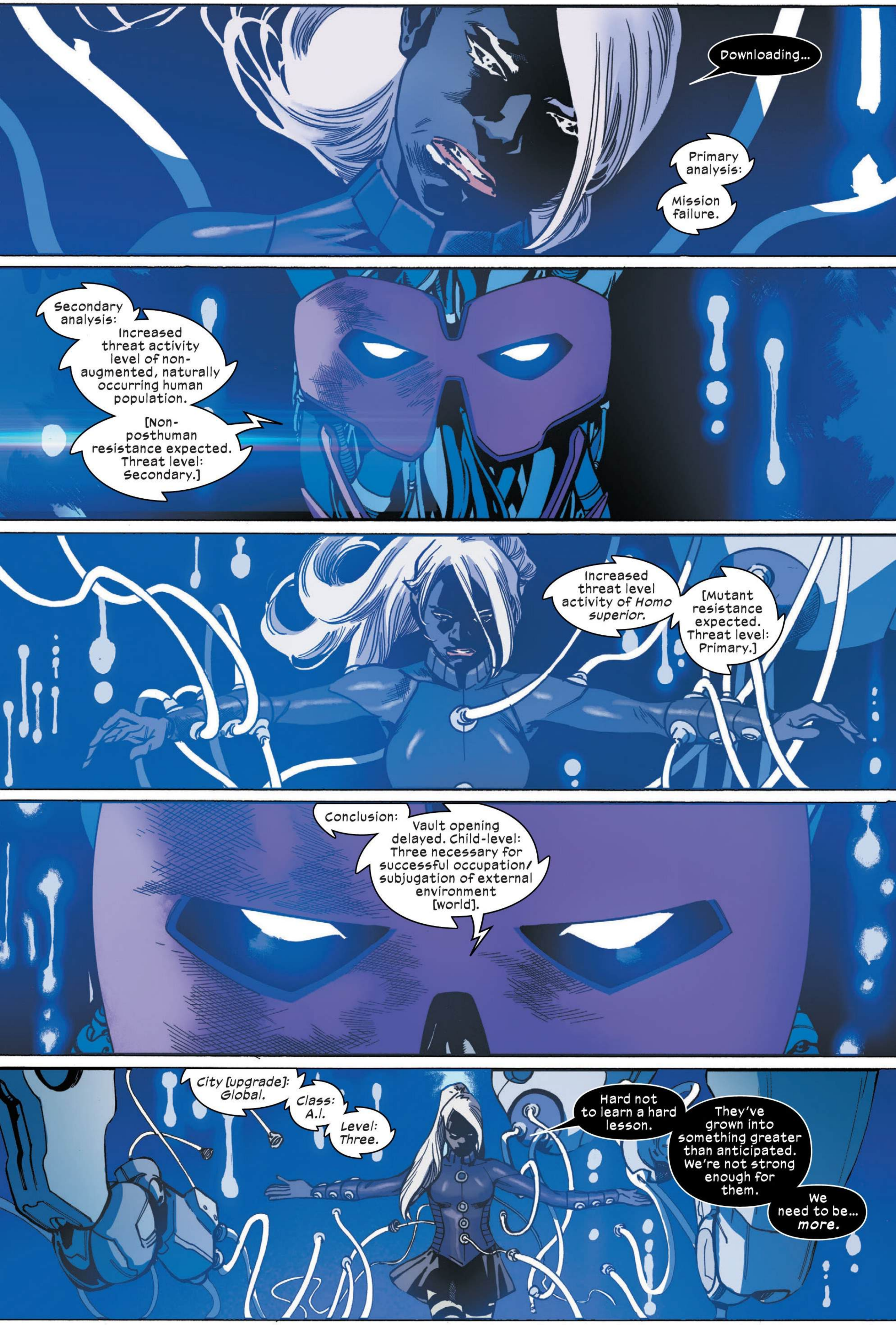
Wolverine

Darwin

Synch

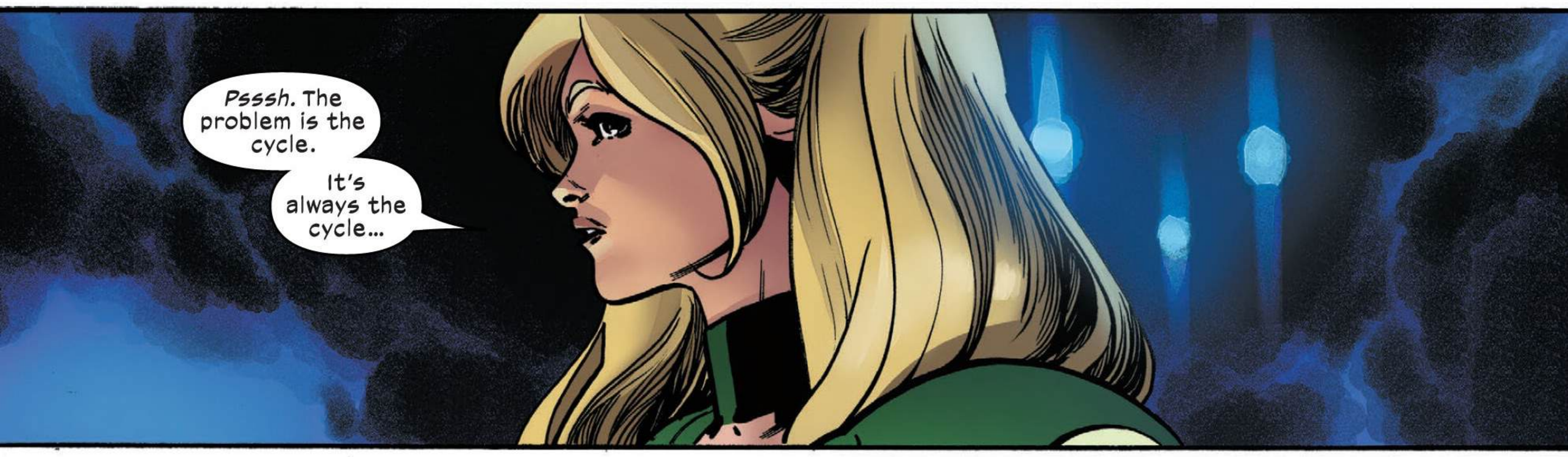

In the center of the Vault is the Dome. In the heart of the Dome is the City.
Scanning for contagion.
Scan complete. [Subject clean.]
Child identified.
Class: Serafina.
Level: Two.

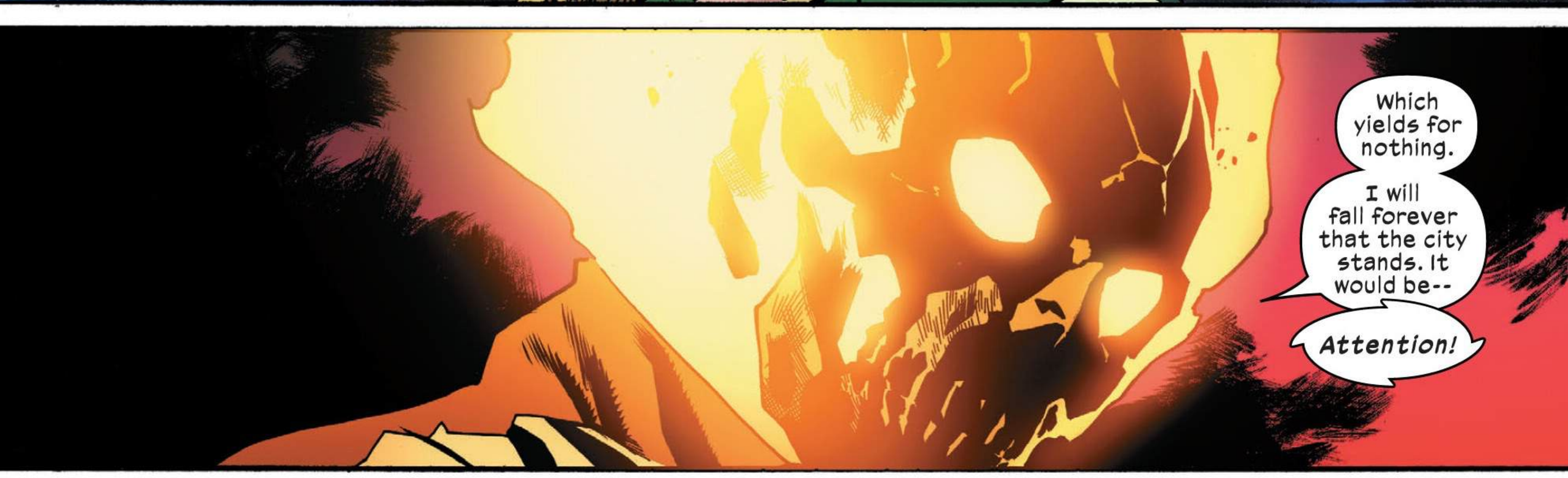
The Vault welcomes you home.
Report.
Report.
Report.
Report.

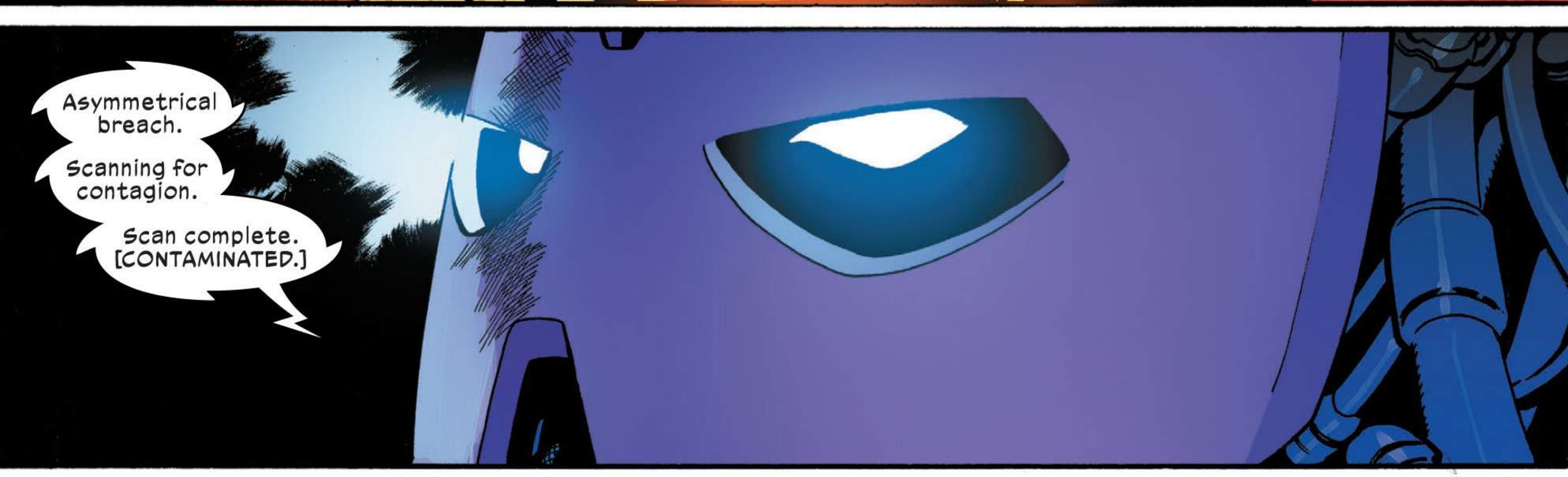

Downloading...
Primary analysis:
Mission failure.
Secondary analysis:
Increased threat activity level of non-augmented, naturally occurring human population.
[Non-posthuman resistance expected. Threat level: Secondary.]
Increased threat level activity of *Homo superior*.
[Mutant resistance expected. Threat level: Primary.]
Conclusion:
Vault opening delayed. Child-level: Three necessary for successful occupation/subjugation of external environment [world].
City [upgrade]: Global.
Class: A.I.
Level: Three.
Hard not to learn a hard lesson.
They've grown into something greater than anticipated. We're not strong enough for them.
We need to be... *more.*

So back into the pot we go.
Terrific.

Make it well done, I say.
A little kiss of creation. Then we emerge in fire and blood.

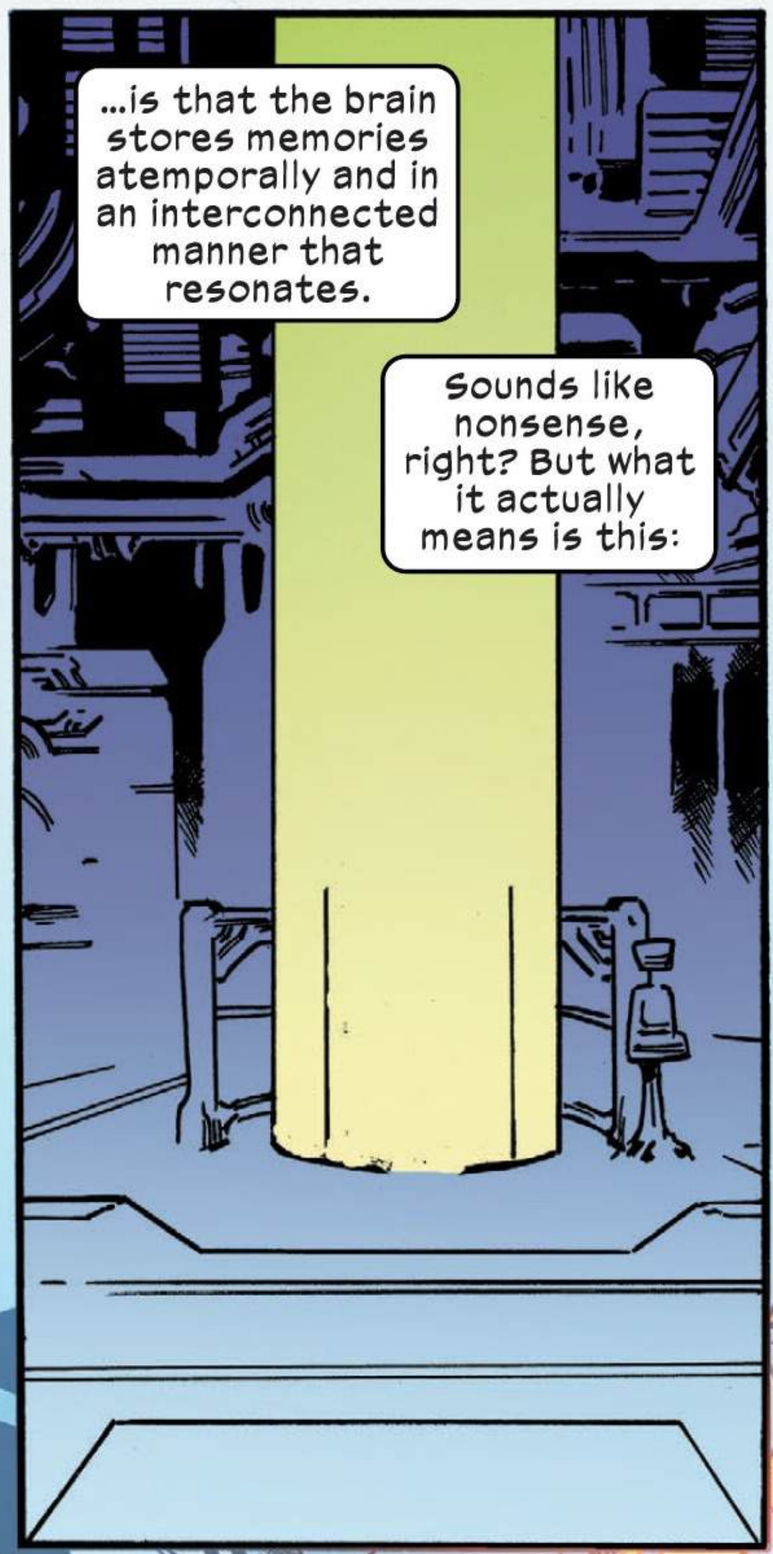

Psssh. The problem is the cycle.
It's always the cycle...

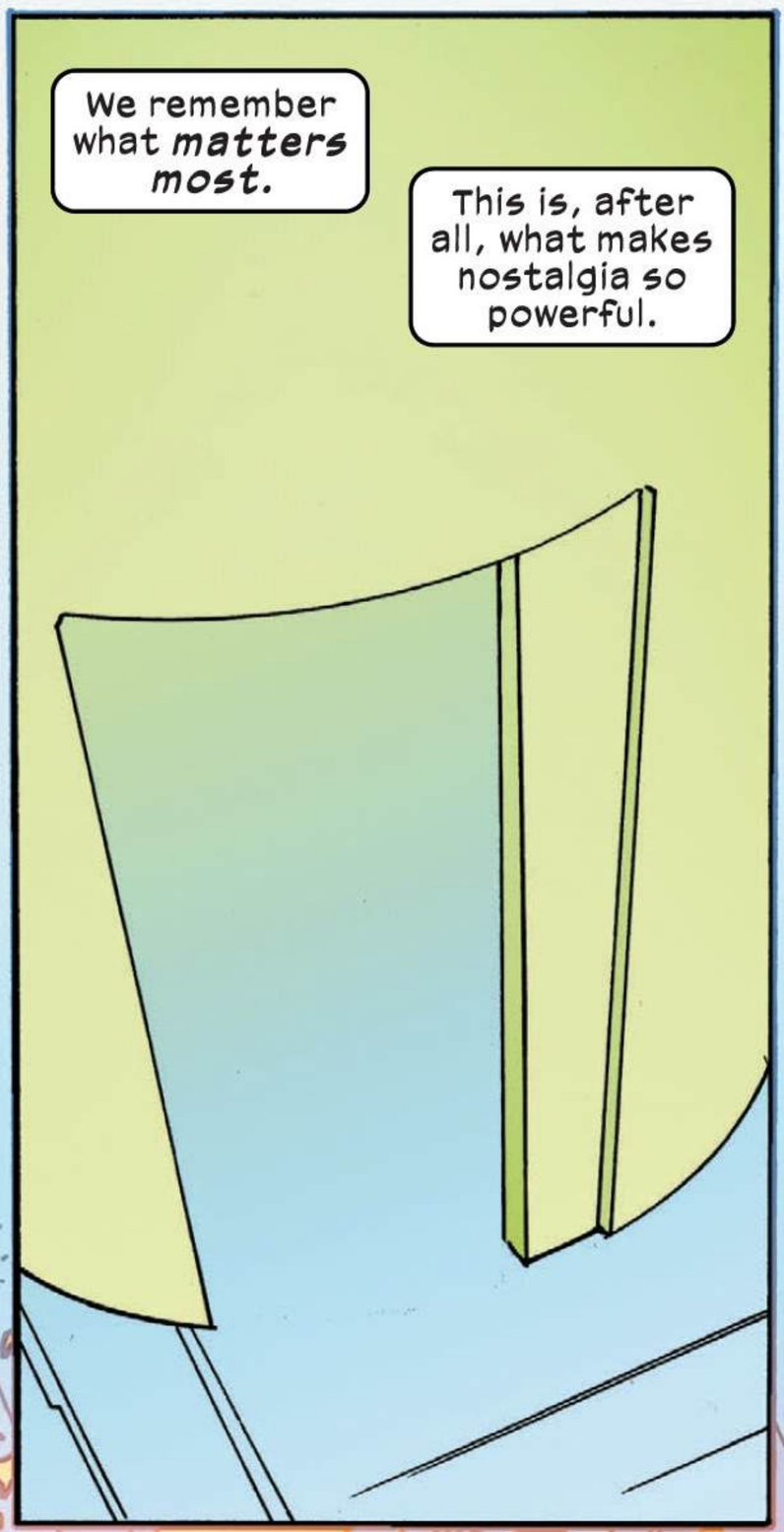

Which yields for nothing.
I will fall forever that the city stands. It would be--
Attention!


Asymmetrical breach.
Scanning for contagion.
Scan complete. [CONTAMINATED.]

Subjects unidentified.
Class: Unknown.
Level: Unknown.
Anomaly detected.
Protect the City!
Protect the City!
Protect the City!
Protect the City!

Here's something to keep in mind regarding these... *memory reports.*
As I understand it--*or better put*--how it was ***explained*** to me...

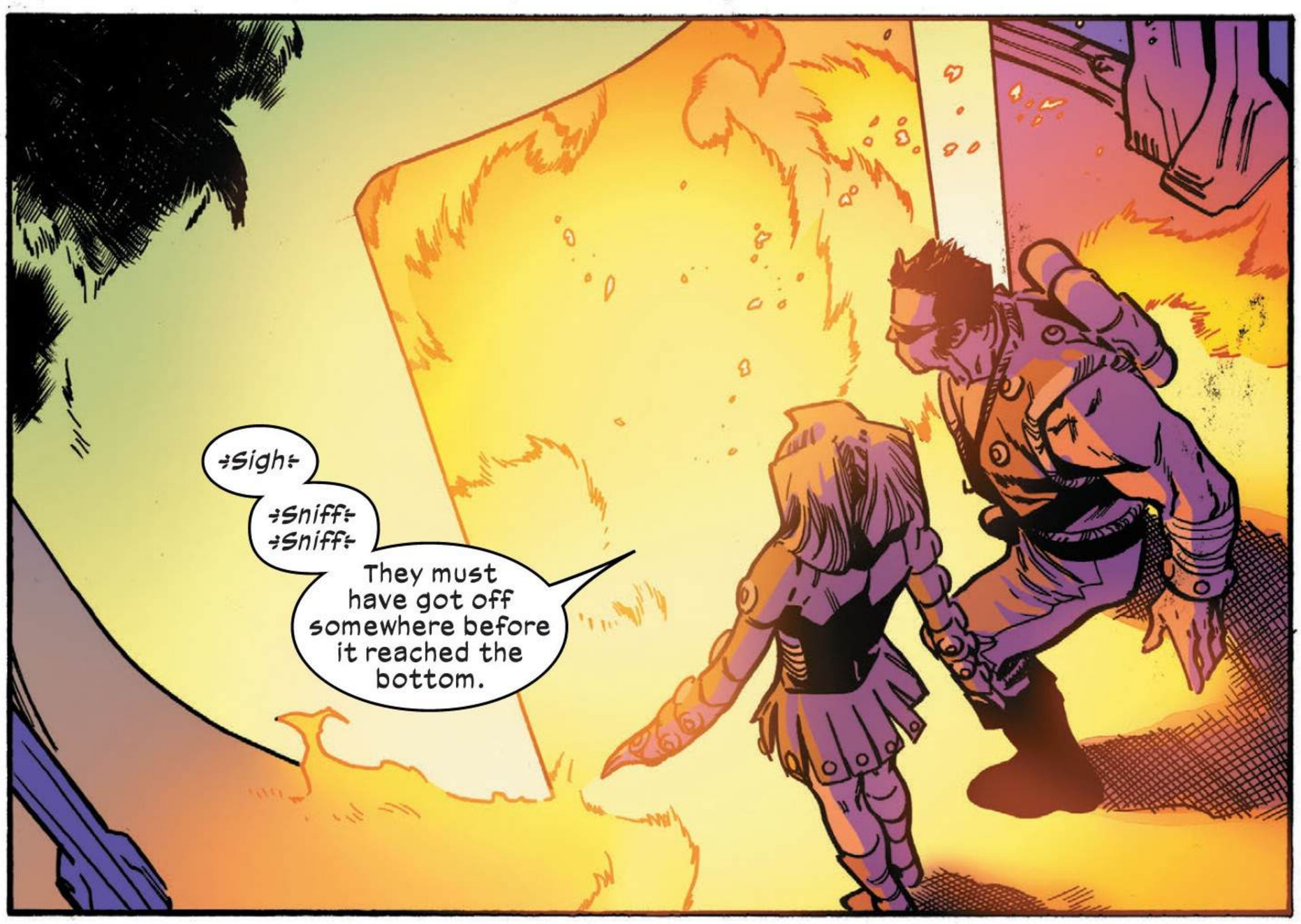

...is that the brain stores memories atemporally and in an interconnected manner that resonates.
Sounds like nonsense, right? But what it actually means is this:

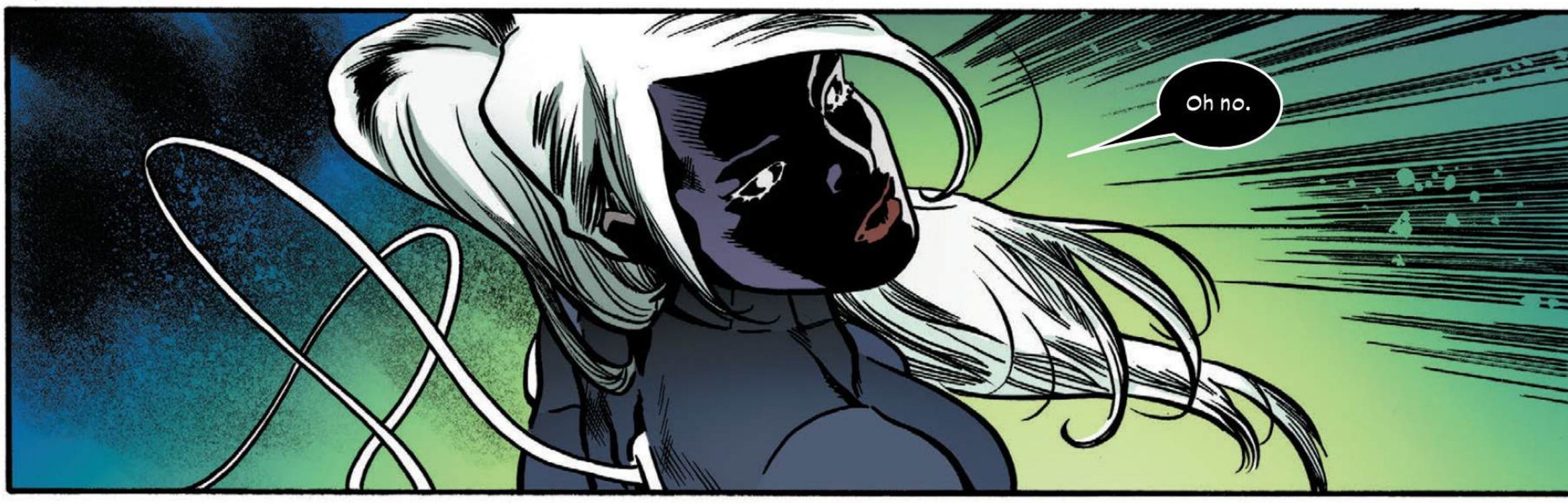

We remember what ***matters most.***
This is, after all, what makes nostalgia so powerful.

Burn it.

FWOOSHH!

Hrmpt! No screams.
I'm impressed.


÷Sigh÷
÷Sniff÷ ÷Sniff÷
They must have got off somewhere before it reached the bottom.


Oh no.

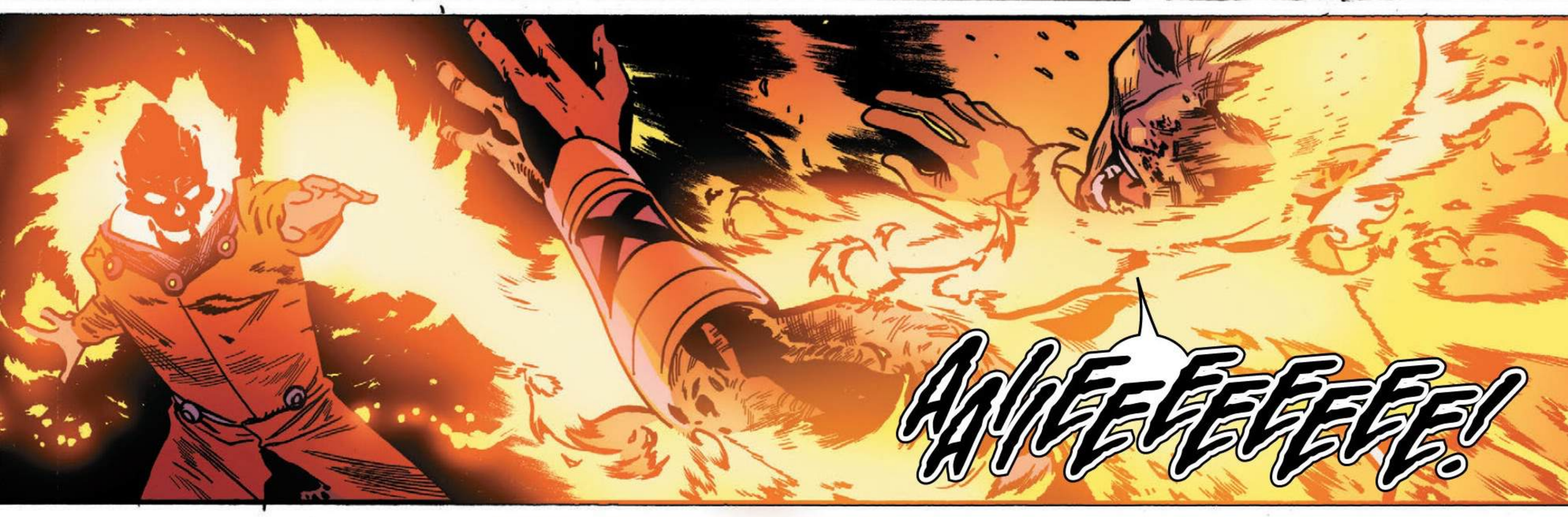
So if something happens five years from now--*but it reminds me of something that happened last week...*
...that means I stand a better chance of remembering that specific memory in the future instead of the other memories that surrounded it.
The thing is, this doesn't have anything to do with facts or logic--*or what actually happened*--it's just how *you* remember it.
How it affected *you.*

In your *head*...and in your *heart*.

What's my point?

Darwin, Laura... myself...in the Vault, we all counted the days...
*Every single one of them...*

But what we remember--*what mattered to each of us*--colors our memory of the experience.



Hurk!

I've got you. *Here.* Use me to *heal yourself.*

Hrrrnnnn.

It...it burns.

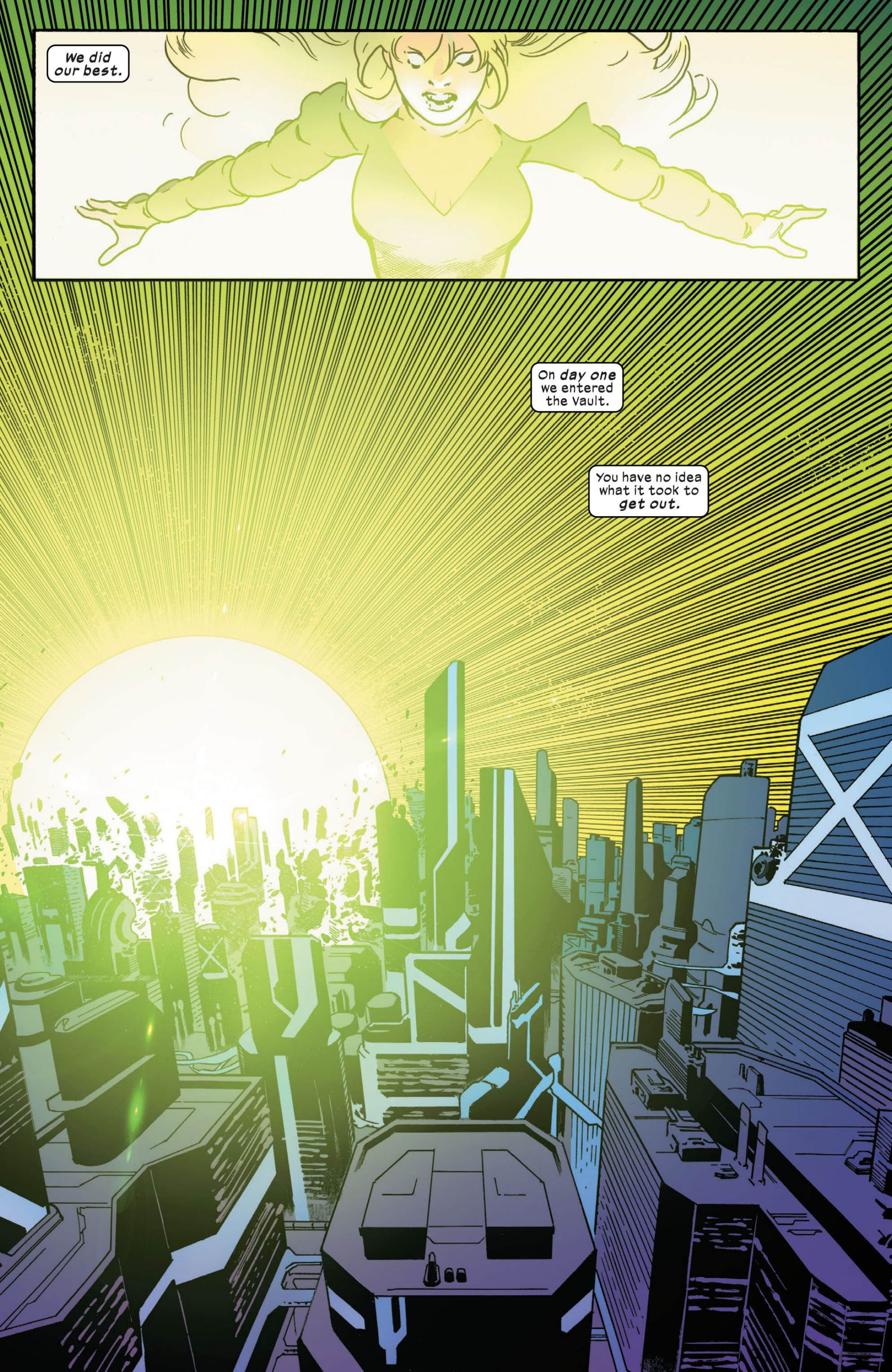
Burns!

Eh?
I didn't think you could copy anyone's powers except *mutants.*
I couldn't...
Looks like that's *changed.*

NO!

You're going to pay for that.

Oh man... she's...she's gonna blow.
Back up! We need to get clear. NOW!
You mutants... thinking you can run from this...
Run all you want. Run as fast as you can.
It's not going to matter.
You can't outrun us. You can't outrun the future.
Our mission is to remember what we learn and report back.
To escape with the knowledge.
I'm telling you the truth, man...


We did our best.
On *day one* we entered the Vault.
You have no idea what it took to *get out.*

[the__2nd_law]
[of_mutantdom]

+

# MURDER NO MAN

+

-- Confidential --

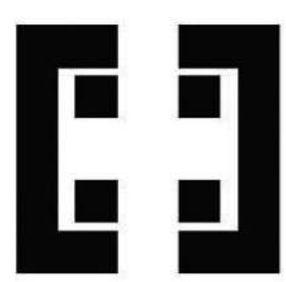
As this Council is completely aware, only FORCE protocols allow the suspension of the three laws of Krakoa. “Murder No Man” is the predictable primary concern of this body at this time.

Our approved reconnoissance operation into the Vault to ascertain the threat level of the Children of the Vault is expected to face stiff, and probably lethal, opposition during the mission. To compound this, it is the Council’s expectation that said opposition will be progressively post-human in nature.

As the Children fall outside of the normal definition of “human,” and the risk of data recovery seems improbable using current legal methods, FORCE protocol is initiated for this mission.

-- X --

[.....]
[is_suspended]



[.....X]
[.....X]

[Krakoa_1]
[Vault__0]

# Out of the Vault

# 21

[.....WOLVERINE]

[.....SYNCH]

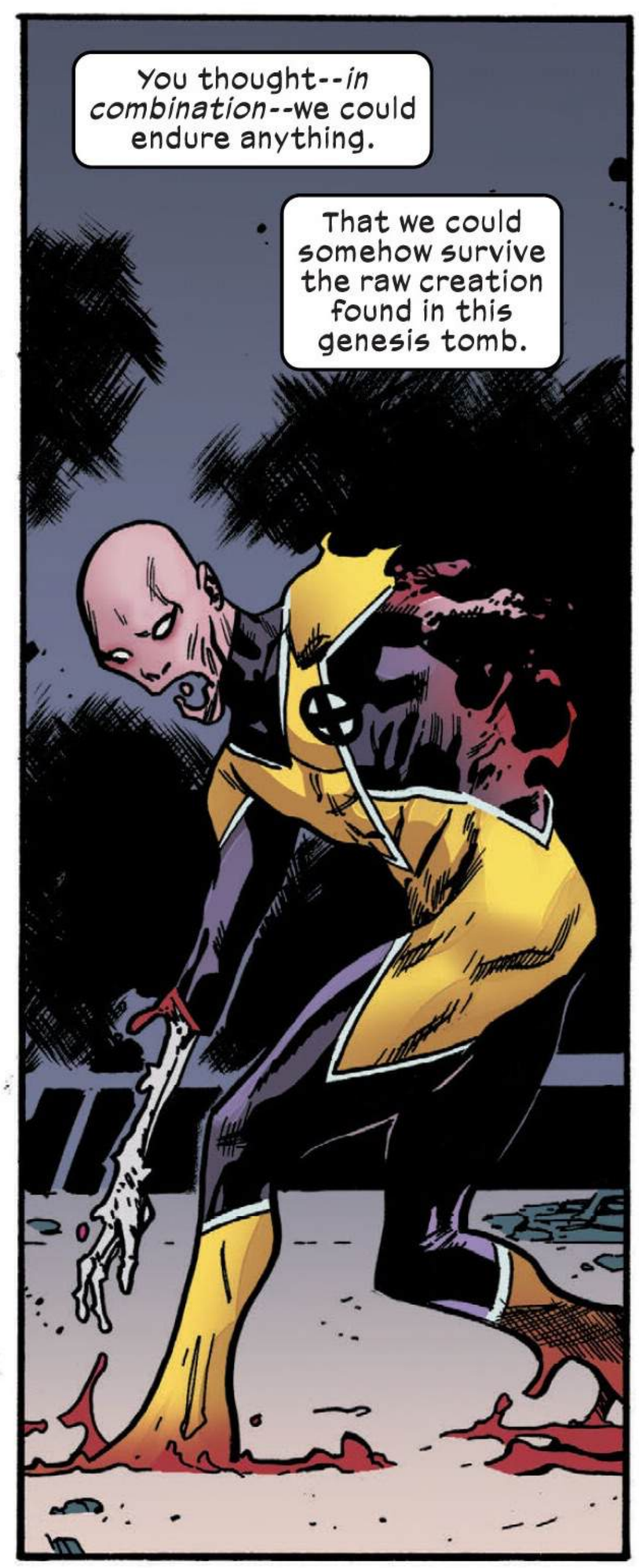
[.....DARWIN]

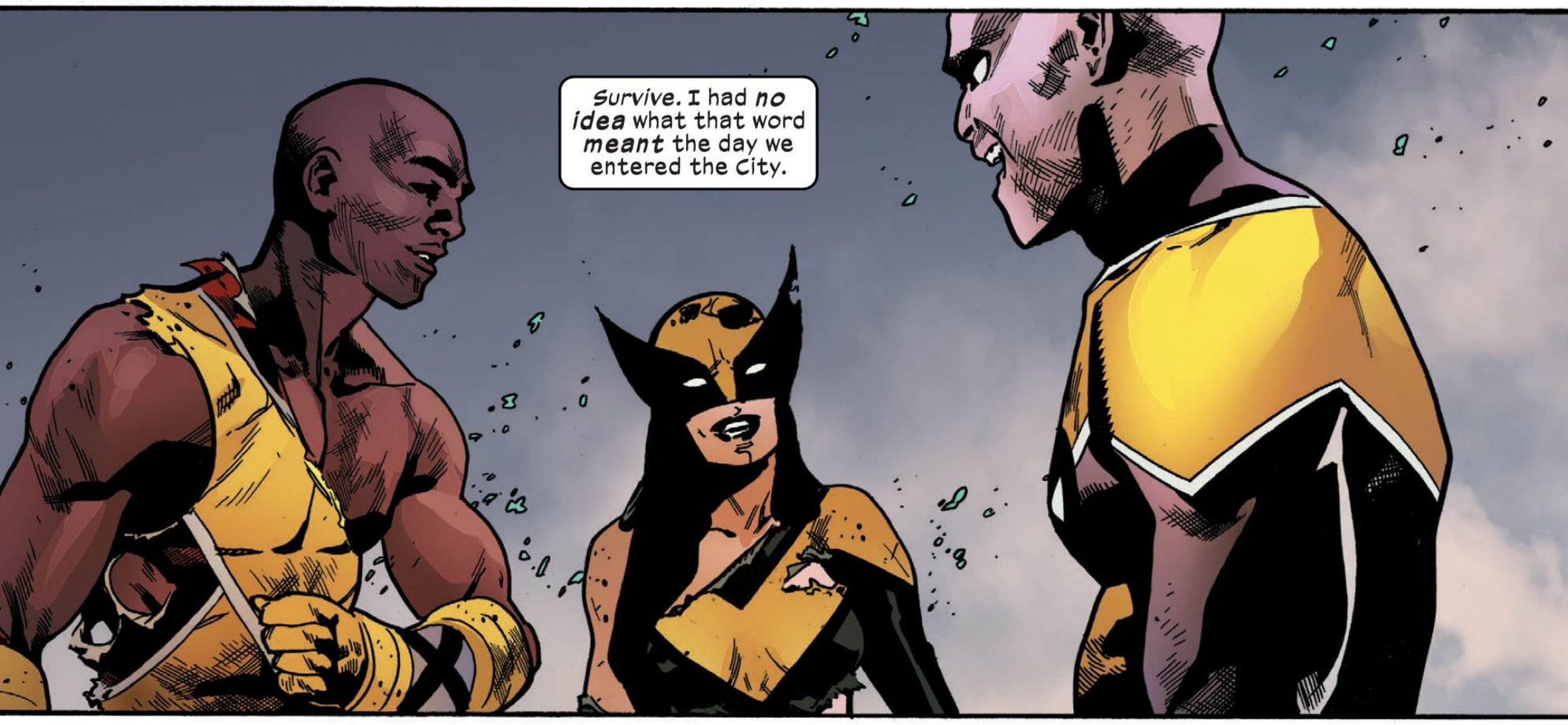
Enter the Vault.

This is the past. South America. The Vault.
You can measure in hours--*maybe minutes*--how quickly I realized life in the Vault would be an exercise in sacrifice and pain.
Looking back--*thinking of it now*--it was all just...***too much.***
The City was too big. The Vault itself, even larger.
The enormity of it was ***paralyzing.*** The scale, ***inconceivable.***

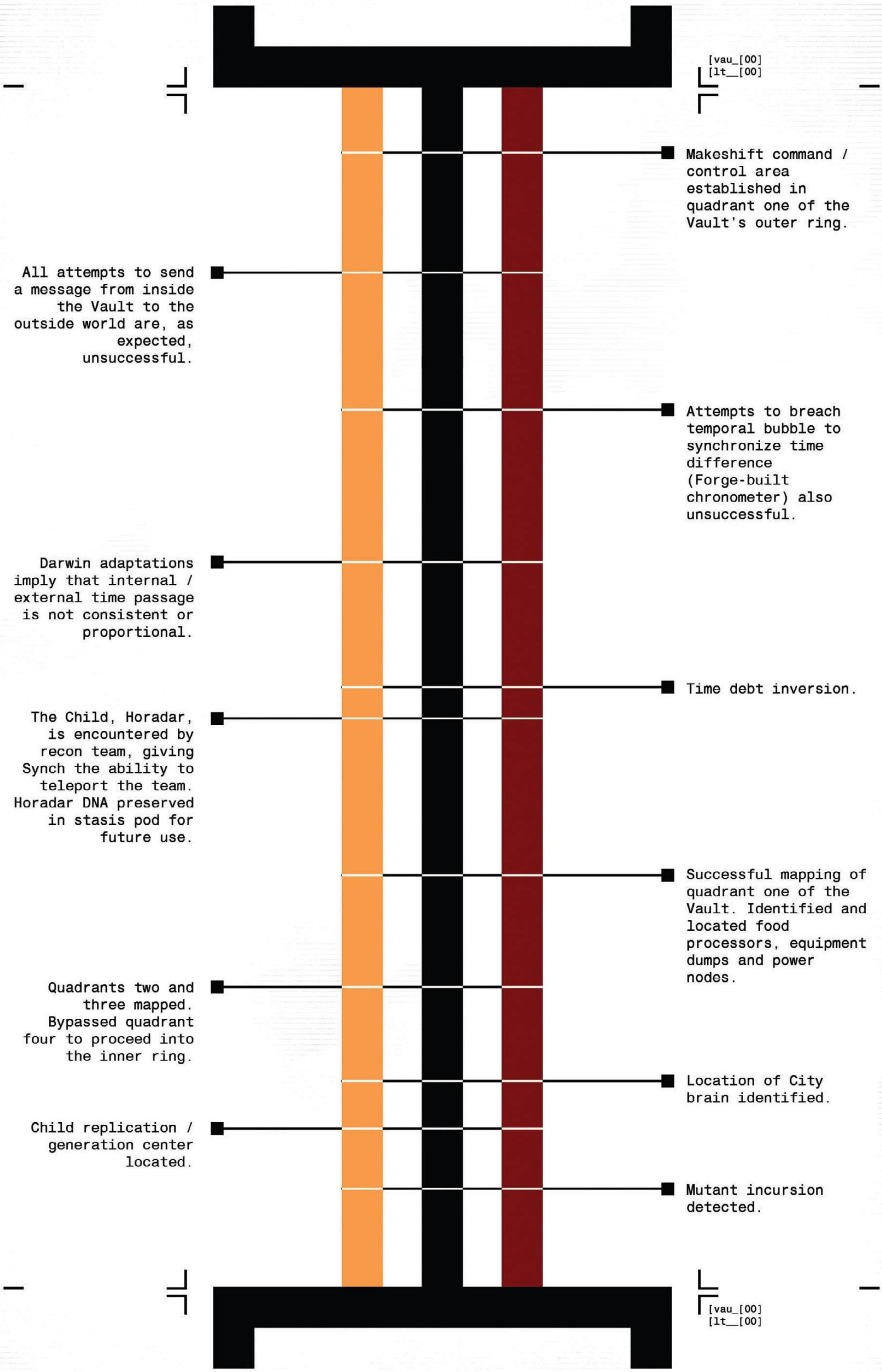
Before we ran--*as we healed*--we watched the destroyed section of the City begin to rebuild itself.
You have to understand, we don't come from a naturally self-healing world. ***They do.***

So I understand why you picked us three to go inside the Vault.


You thought--*in combination*--we could endure anything.
That we could somehow survive the raw creation found in this genesis tomb.

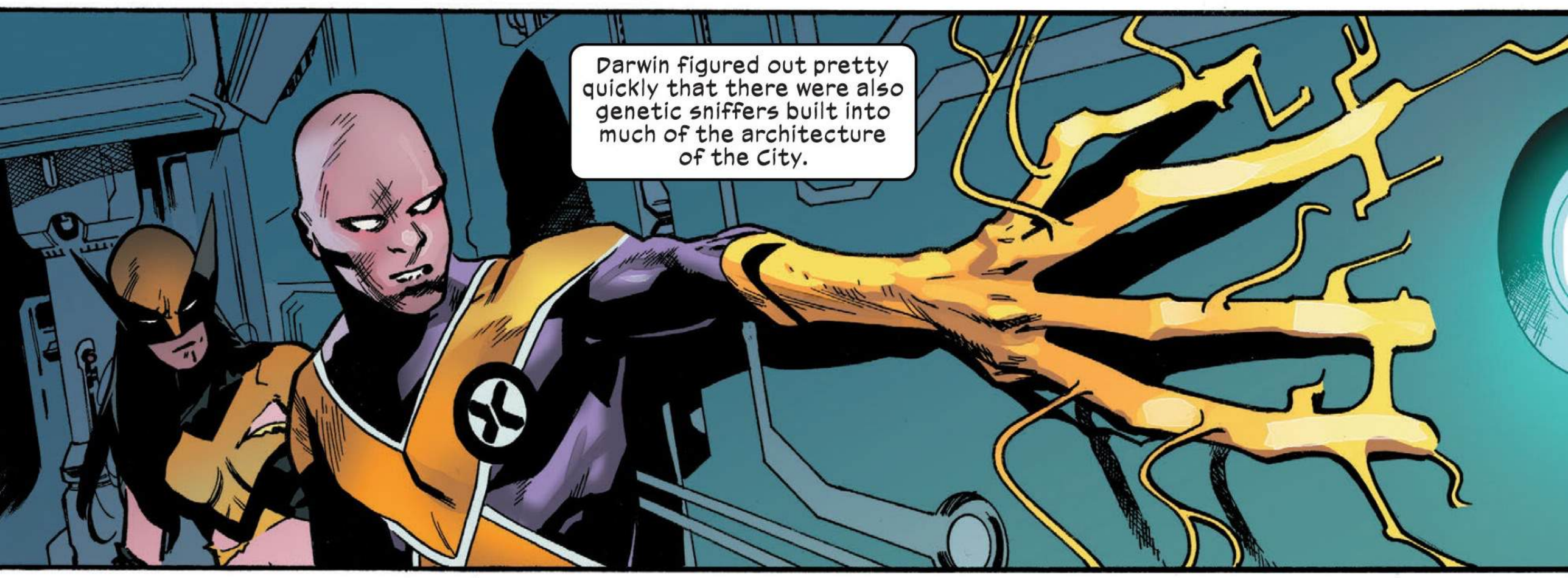

*Survive.* I had ***no idea*** what that word ***meant*** the day we entered the City.

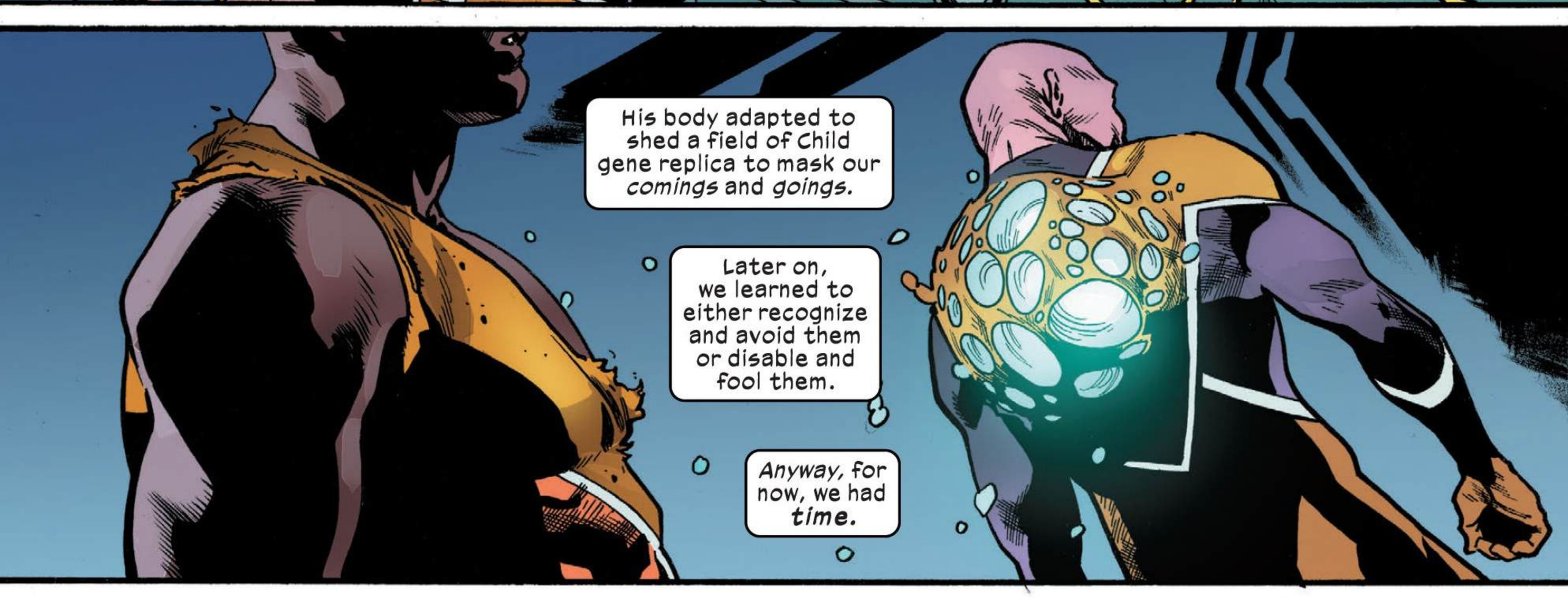
The first fifty years were the ***longest.***


[vau_[00]
[lt__[00]
Makeshift command / control area established in quadrant one of the Vault's outer ring.
All attempts to send a message from inside the Vault to the outside world are, as expected, unsuccessful.
Attempts to breach temporal bubble to synchronize time difference (Forge-built chronometer) also unsuccessful.
Darwin adaptations imply that internal / external time passage is not consistent or proportional.
Time debt inversion.
The Child, Horadar, is encountered by recon team, giving Synch the ability to teleport the team. Horadar DNA preserved in stasis pod for future use.
Successful mapping of quadrant one of the Vault. Identified and located food processors, equipment dumps and power nodes.
Quadrants two and three mapped. Bypassed quadrant four to proceed into the inner ring.
Location of City brain identified.
Child replication / generation center located.
Mutant incursion detected.
[vau_[00]
[lt__[00]

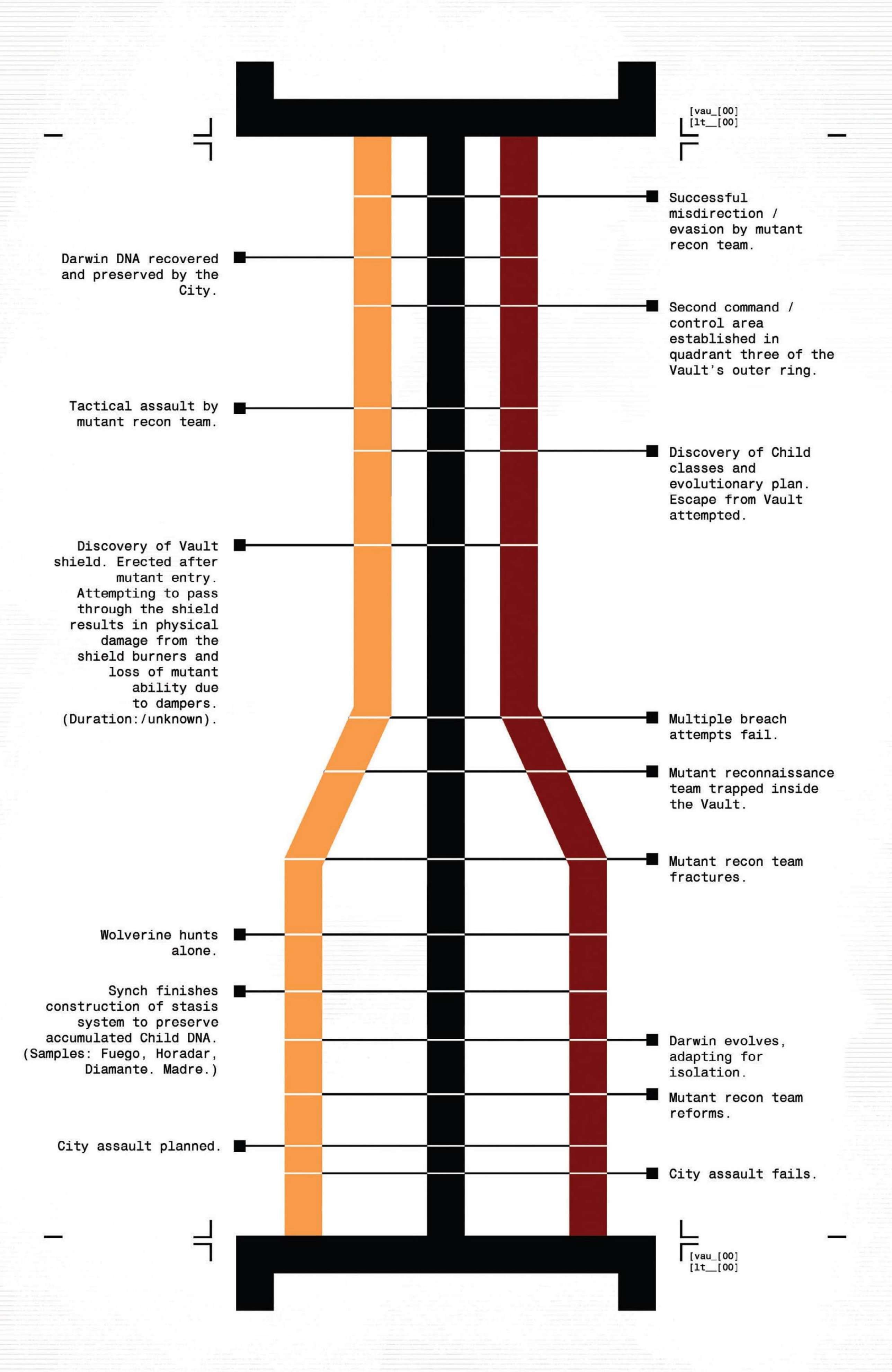
The Children must have assumed we were dead--*vaporized or atomized or something*--because they didn't try to find us.

We laid low and set up inside the outer ring to avoid the builders that were engaged in edge creation.

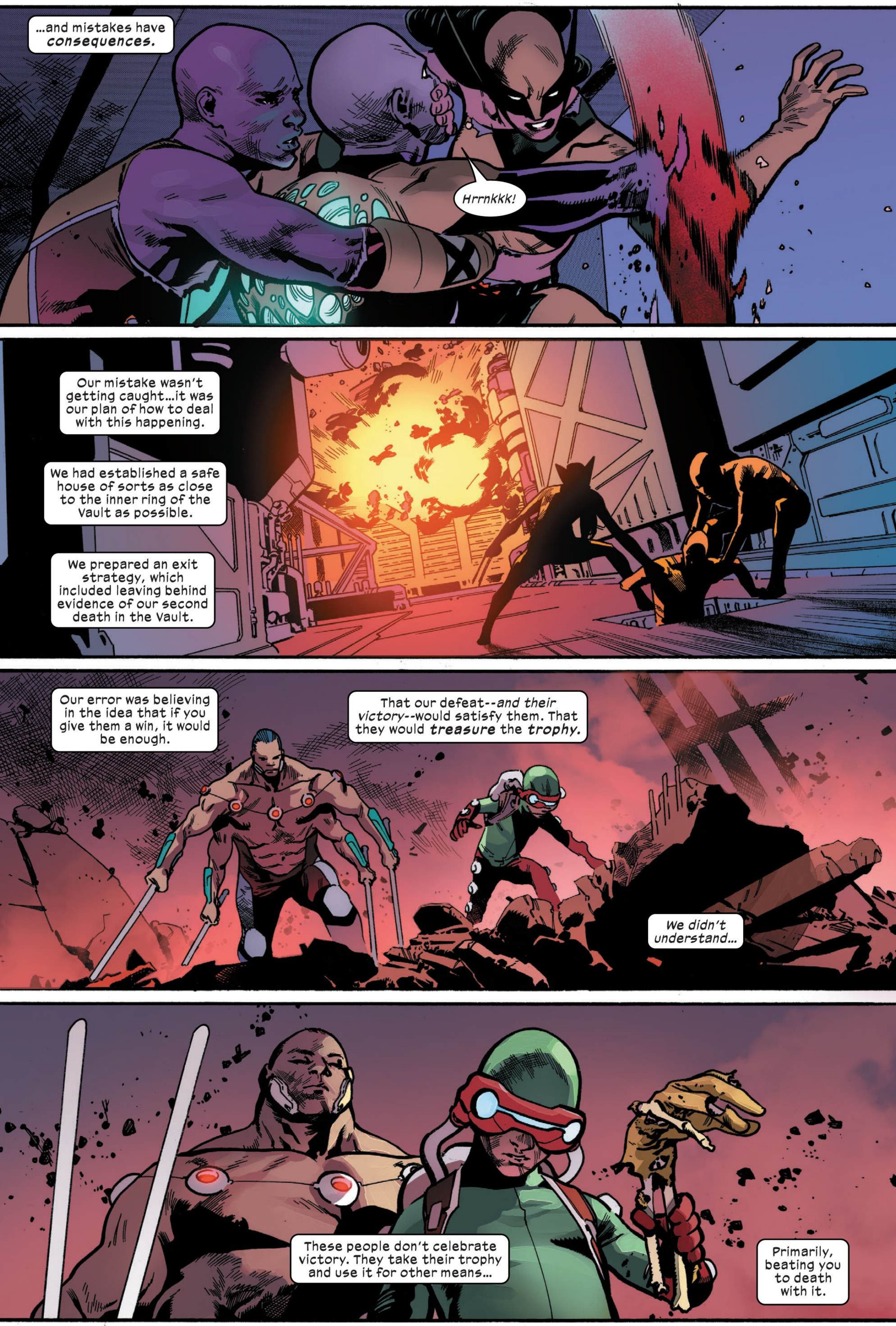

Darwin figured out pretty quickly that there were also genetic sniffers built into much of the architecture of the City.


His body adapted to shed a field of Child gene replica to mask our *comings* and *goings*.
Later on, we learned to either recognize and avoid them or disable and fool them.
*Anyway*, for now, we had ***time***.

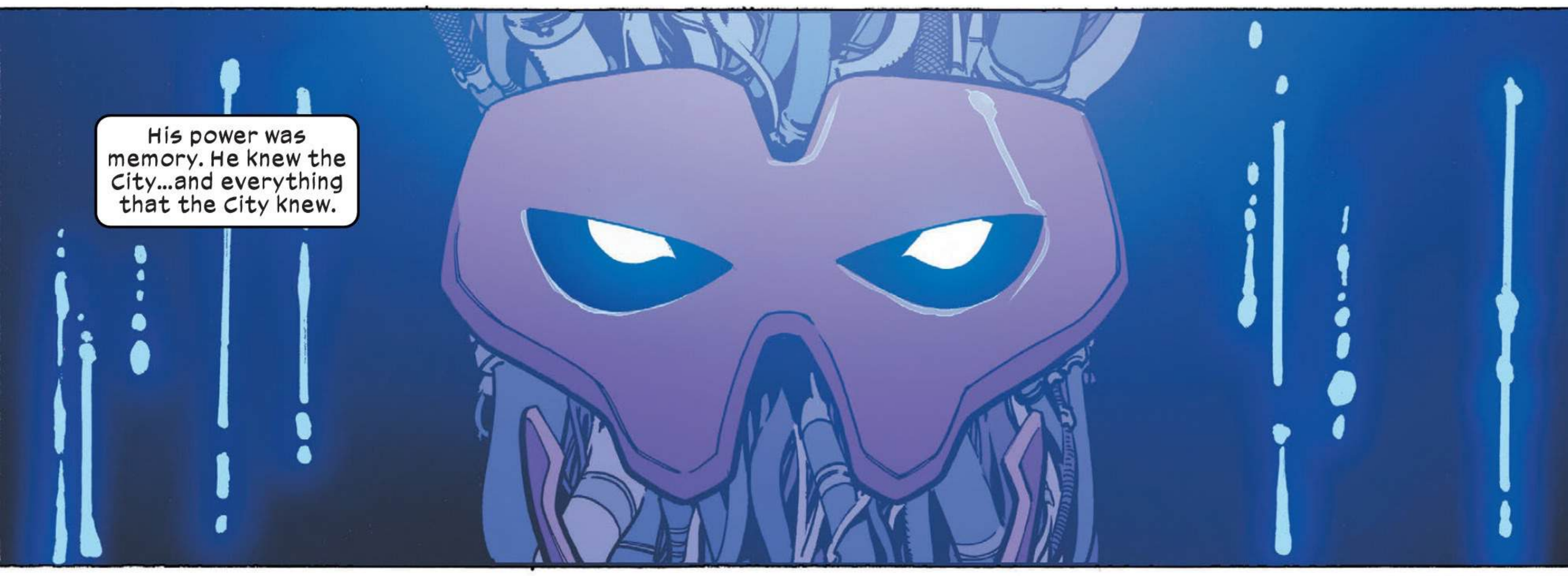
So we watched... and learned.
We became aware of the City pulsing and breathing as it underwent the ebb and flow of evolutionary leaps.
We acclimatized ourselves to the cycles of the Vault and timed our reconnaissance missions for when the City *slept* and the Children *grew.*
Two months of *dormancy* for every two of *growth.*
*During their season of night, we haunted the dreams of sleeping Children.*
By the end of the sixth of these cycles, we had gained a surface understanding of the Vault.
City mapping of power nodes, hatching chambers and the brain of the City itself.

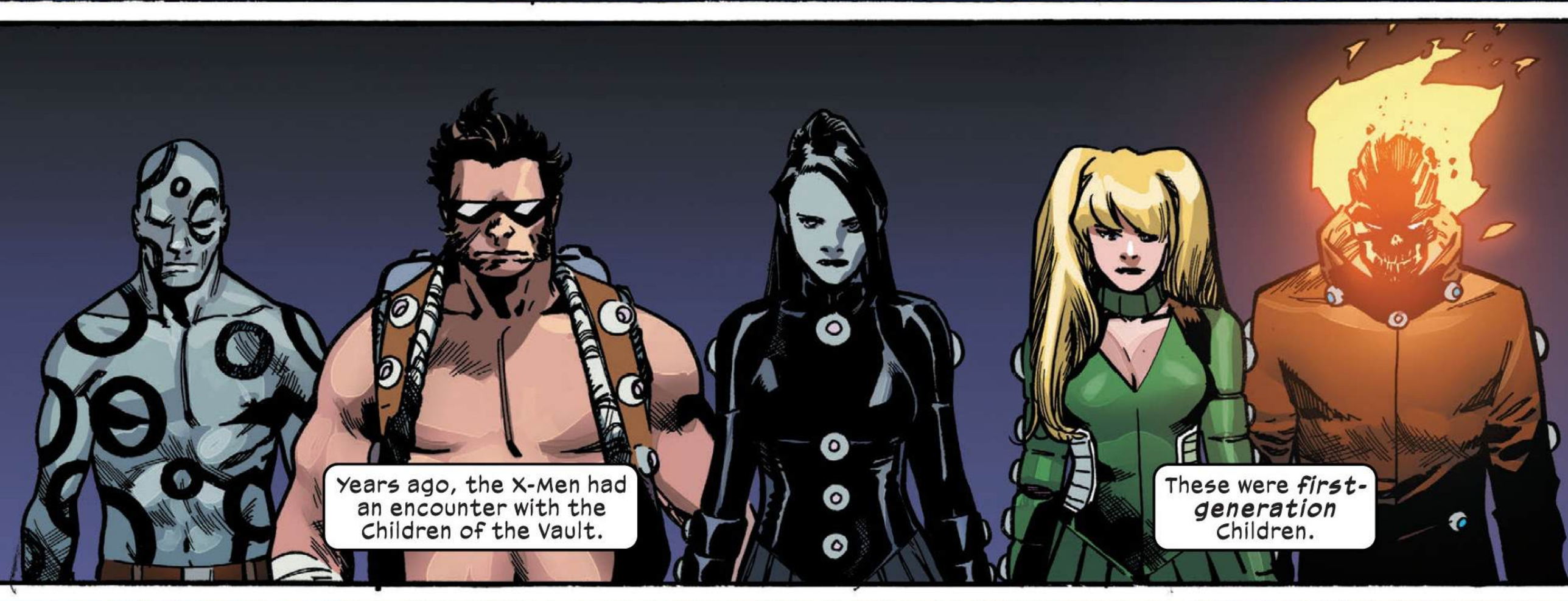

[vau_[00]
[lt__[00]
Successful misdirection / evasion by mutant recon team.
Darwin DNA recovered and preserved by the City.
Second command / control area established in quadrant three of the Vault's outer ring.
Tactical assault by mutant recon team.
Discovery of Child classes and evolutionary plan. Escape from Vault attempted.
Discovery of Vault shield. Erected after mutant entry. Attempting to pass through the shield results in physical damage from the shield burners and loss of mutant ability due to dampers. (Duration:/unknown).
Multiple breach attempts fail.
Mutant reconnaissance team trapped inside the Vault.
Mutant recon team fractures.
Wolverine hunts alone.
Synch finishes construction of stasis system to preserve accumulated Child DNA. (Samples: Fuego, Horadar, Diamante. Madre.)
Darwin evolves, adapting for isolation.
Mutant recon team reforms.
City assault planned.
City assault fails.
[vau_[00]
[lt__[00]

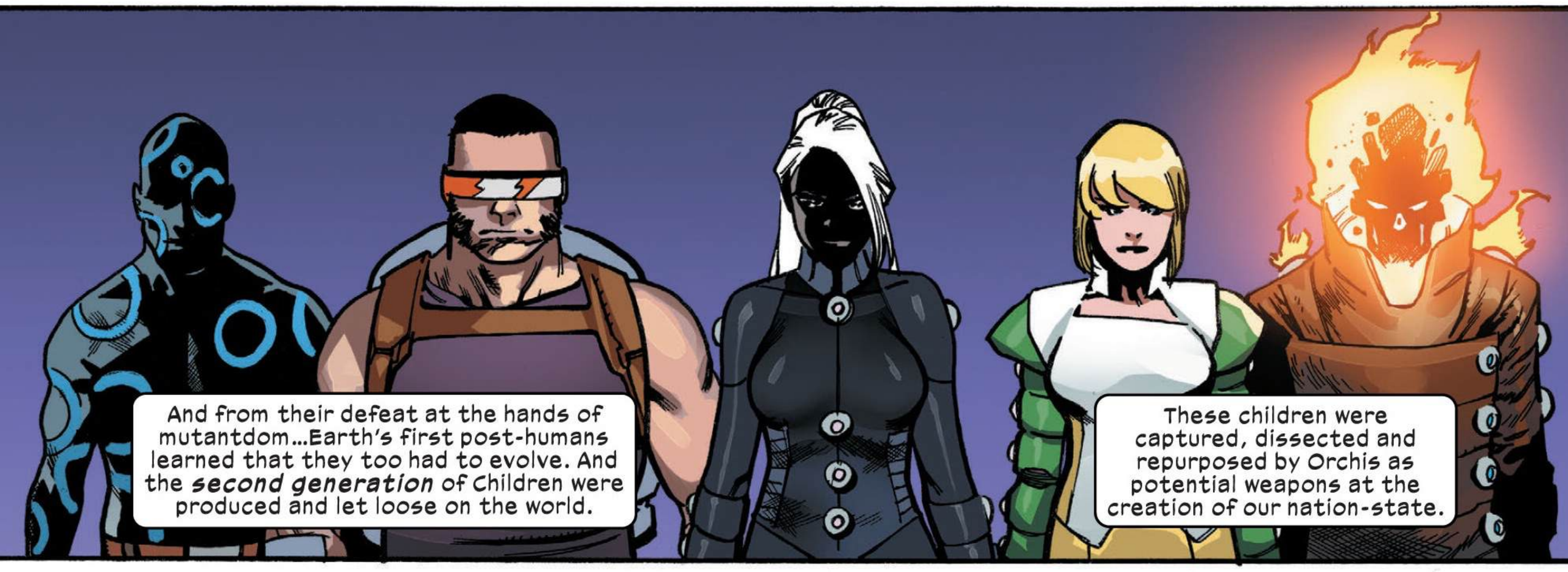
It was just enough time for fear to have disappeared and our thin layer of knowledge to hide an ocean of ignorance.
The Child *Madre* exists inverted from the rest of the Children.
While they sleep, she works. And while they live and grow, she rests.
On our first pass through the Crèche, where--*like our mutant Arbor Magna*--the bodies of reborn Child classes wait for rebirth and upgrades, we avoided her by chance...
...but on our second visit, our luck ran out.
We made a *mistake*...
Are we sure tha--
*Do it.*

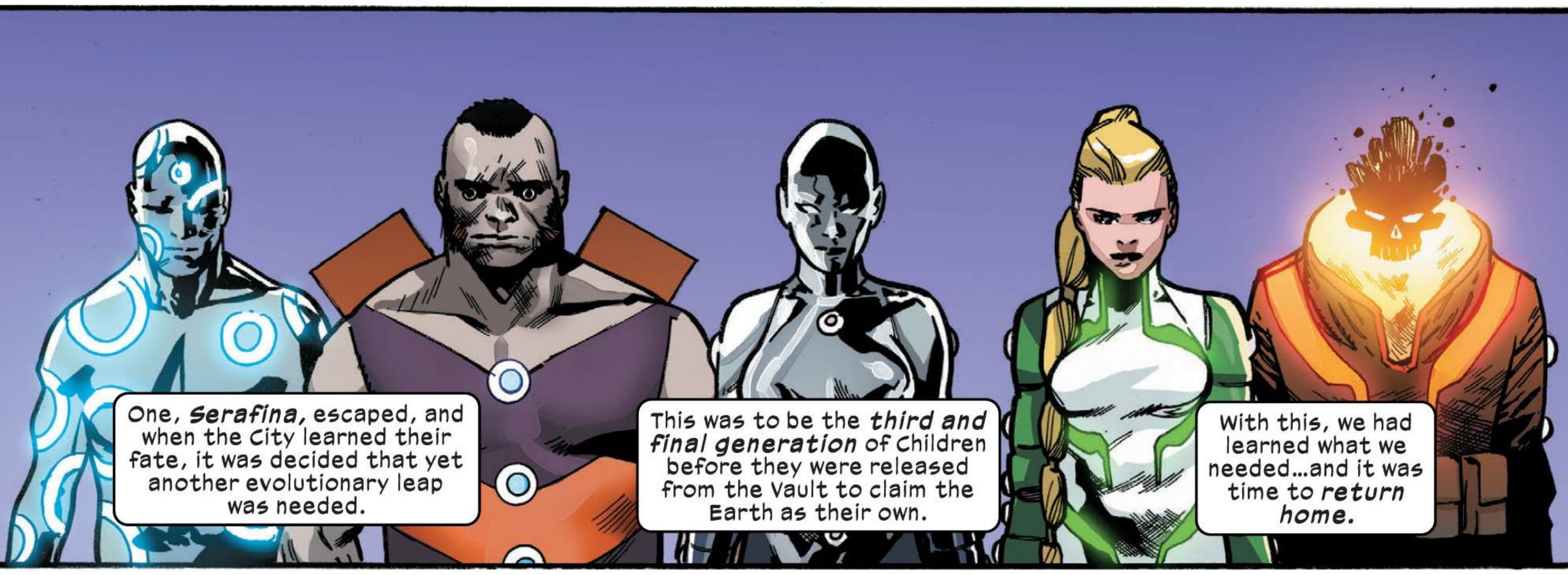

...and mistakes have *consequences.*
Hrrnkkk!
Our mistake wasn't getting caught...it was our plan of how to deal with this happening.
We had established a safe house of sorts as close to the inner ring of the Vault as possible.
We prepared an exit strategy, which included leaving behind evidence of our second death in the Vault.
Our error was believing in the idea that if you give them a win, it would be enough.
That our defeat--*and their victory*--would satisfy them. That they would ***treasure*** the ***trophy.***
*We didn't understand...*
These people don't celebrate victory. They take their trophy and use it for other means...
Primarily, beating you to death with it.

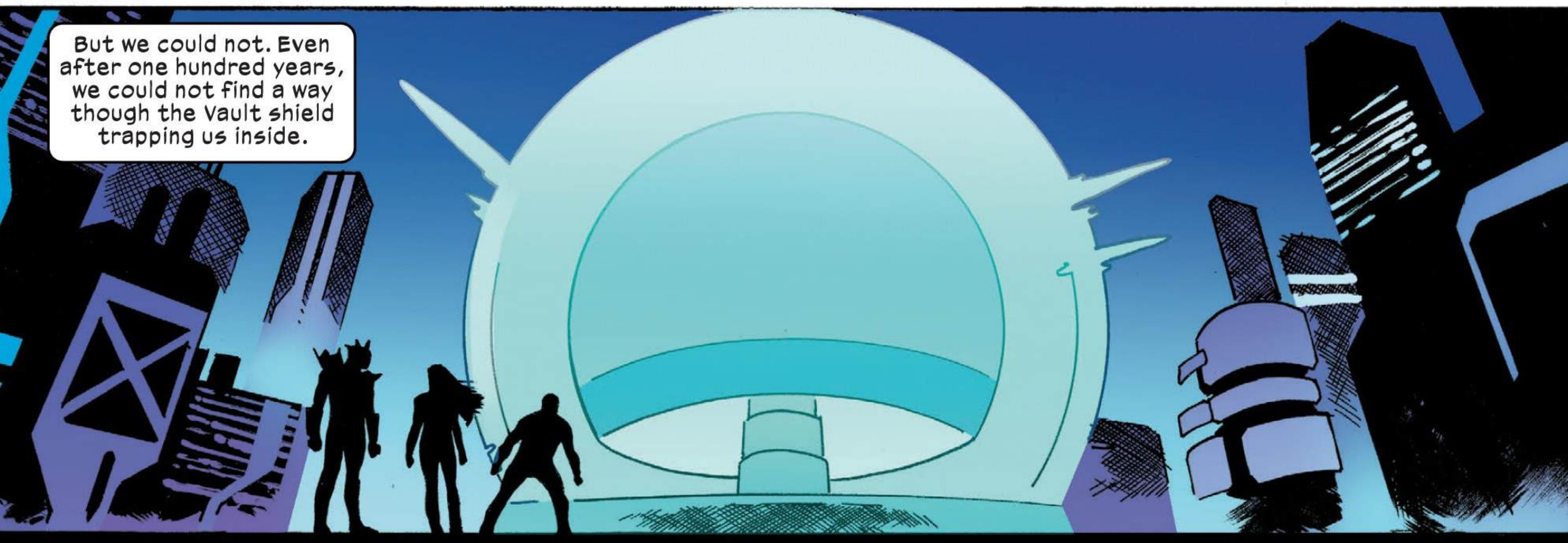
When we had taken our game of little discoveries and survival as far as we could...
...we decided to *change the rules.*
Seize fire from *the source...*
...and accumulate *real knowledge.*
The Child *Diamante* was a living repository of Vault history.


His power was memory. He knew the City...and everything that the City knew.


Years ago, the X-Men had an encounter with the Children of the Vault.
These were *first-generation* Children.


And from their defeat at the hands of mutantdom...Earth's first post-humans learned that they too had to evolve. And the *second generation* of Children were produced and let loose on the world.
These children were captured, dissected and repurposed by Orchis as potential weapons at the creation of our nation-state.


One, *Serafina,* escaped, and when the City learned their fate, it was decided that yet another evolutionary leap was needed.
This was to be the *third and final generation* of Children before they were released from the Vault to claim the Earth as their own.
With this, we had learned what we needed...and it was time to *return home.*


But we could not. Even after one hundred years, we could not find a way though the Vault shield trapping us inside.

In our temporal prison, we only had one option: continue to study--*to learn*--until we found a way to escape and make our way home.

Eventually--*at the apex of a dormant cycle*--we gambled and infiltrated the heart of the Vault, the City itself.
*We gambled...*

They had laid the perfect trap and waited patiently for decades...for us to walk right into it.
...and *lost.*
In retrospect, it was obvious they were after Darwin.
Laura and I--*I don't remember exactly when I started calling her that instead of* Wolverine, *but I do remember the day she no longer seemed to mind--*
--we were an afterthought.
Which made losing her even worse. *I should have held on...*
*I should have done more...*
The years were made worse in isolation.
But it's the ***regret*** that made me feel ***old.***

Synch attempts to rescue teammates. All attempts fail due to Child alertness and enhanced security.

Darwin and Wolverine remain prisoners.

Unable to rescue his friends, and as a result unable to regenerate/restore/extend his life, Synch is forced to 'escape' the Vault timeline.

Synch ambushes and steals the power of Child Terramoto. Also collects necessary supplies for dormant period.

Using Terramoto's earth-moving abilities, Synch confirms his belief that the shield does not extend directly beneath the Vault.

Tunneling beyond the Vault's temporal bubble. Synch waits one week and re-enters over a century later.

Synch frees Wolverine. Darwin cannot be located.

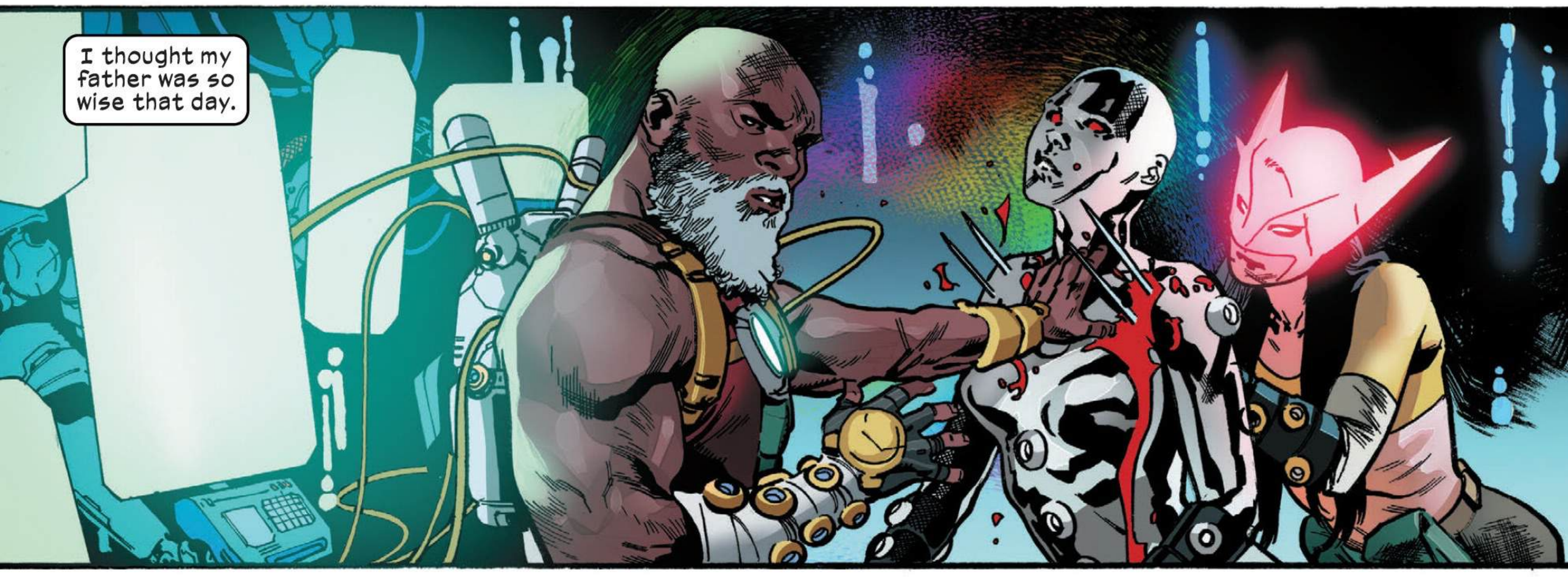
Wolverine and Synch search for Darwin, refusing to leave him behind.

Wolverine and Synch endure.

Child Serafina captured. Powers copied. City datacore and location of Darwin now accessible.

I had decades--*longer*--alone with my thoughts.
Survival and observation could only fill so many hours...or weeks...or years...
Living at the whim of post-humanity stirred memories of the past.
Looming death--*inevitable death*--demanding an audience with the ghosts of my childhood.
I can't help but remember when I was younger--*still posing as human with my human mother and human father*--a few years before I had became something more...
I remember my dad catching me looking at *him* as he was looking at *her*--I remember what he said:
"Son, most people don't know how to explain it...but I sure do, *so listen closely...*

"Do you know the difference between caring for someone and loving them?
"If you *love them*...then you're willing to *die for them.*
"That's the *difference.*
"That's how you know it's *real.*"


I thought my father was so wise that day.

There he is. *Oh my god...*
I think I know what this is...I think I know what they're doing to him...

I thought I'd carry that truth with me forever.

Well, let me tell you something...

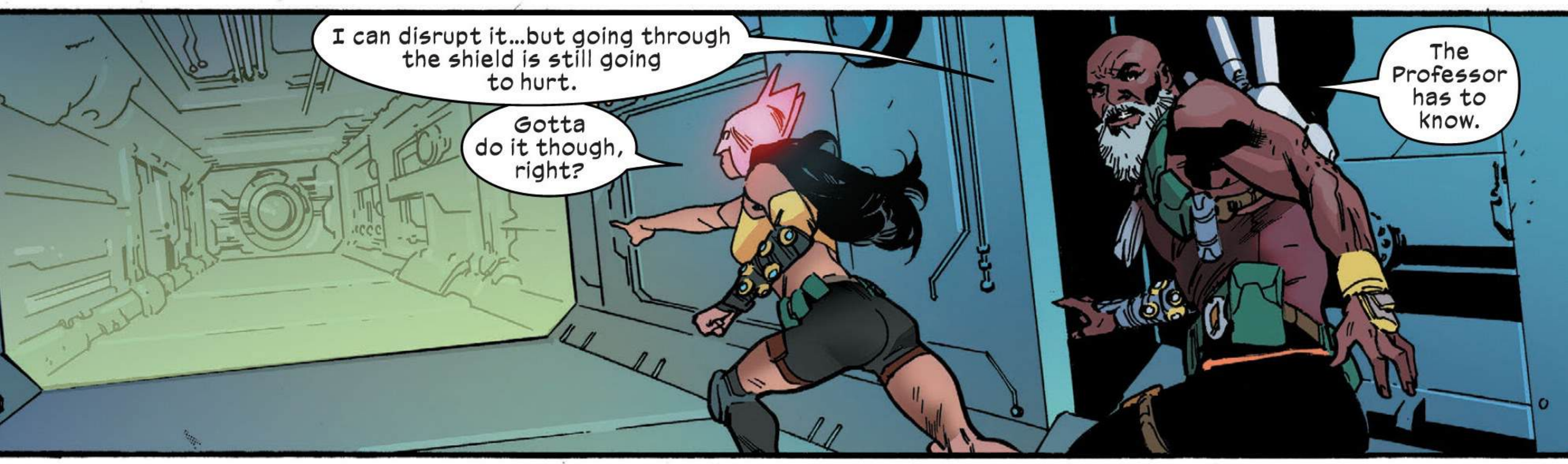
Most people have no idea what forever means.
But I do...
...and so did she.

Location of Darwin discovered.

Revelations of the Diamante / City datacore alignment:

- Prior to Krakoa-era mutantdom, projections for mutant displacement required the creation of third-generation Children.
- Post-establishment of Krakoan-era mutantdom, third-generation Children no longer projected to be successful in displacement protocol.
- Fourth-generation Children required.
- Creation of fourth-generation Children beyond the current capabilities of the City.
- Examination of the mutant Darwin's acquired genetic material reveals highly adaptable evolutionary structure.
- Acquire the mutant Darwin.
- Subject Darwin atomization and reconfiguration loop count: 10,278.
- Genome integration achieved. Harmonic convergence possible.
- Subject Darwin final atomization and biomass seeding complete.
- Fourth-generation Children now possible.
- Begin Child evolution.

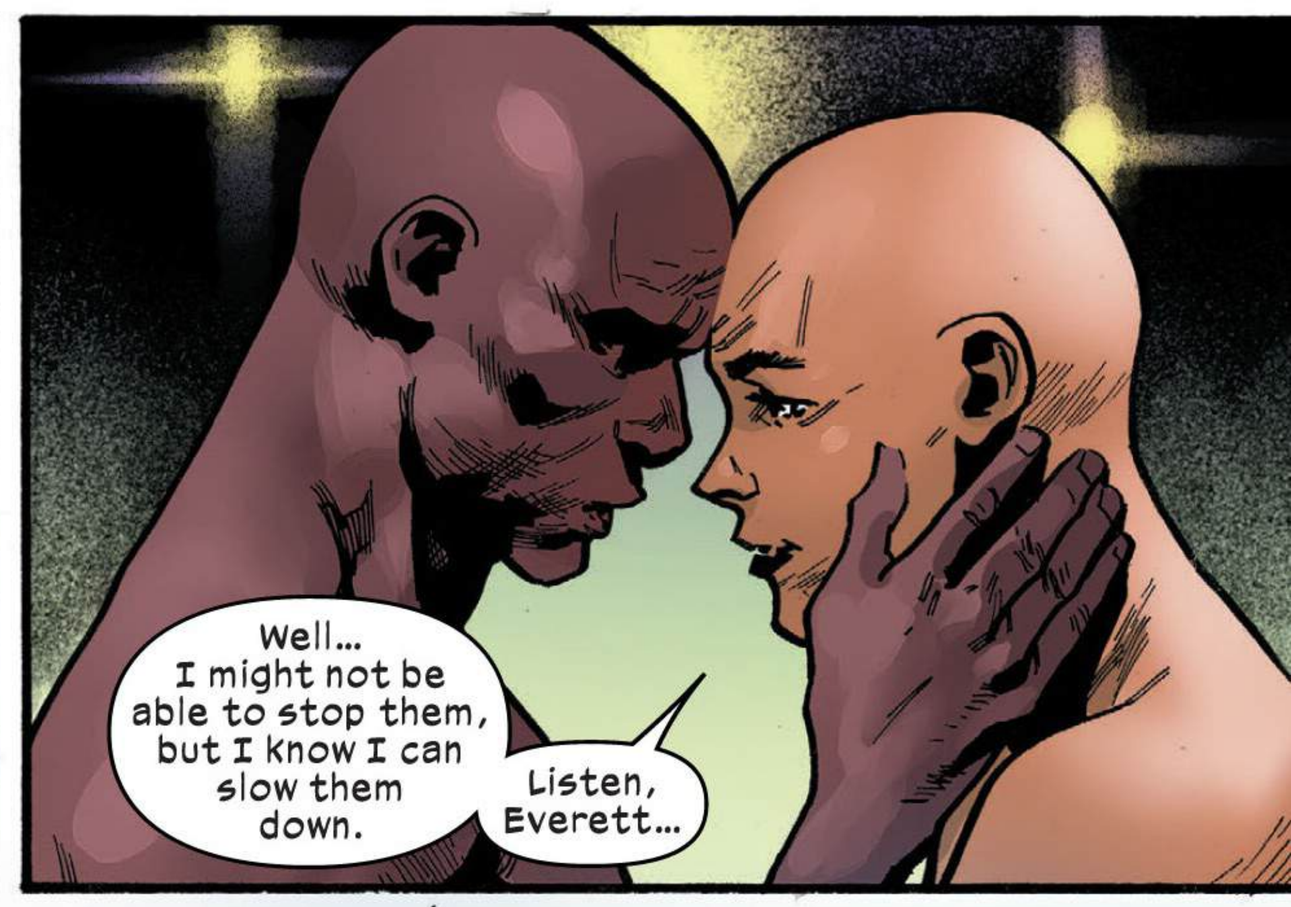
Mutant recon team attempts Vault escape using stasis DNA of Merbavon, a Child disruptor.


I can disrupt it...but going through the shield is still going to hurt.
Gotta do it though, right?
The Professor has to know.

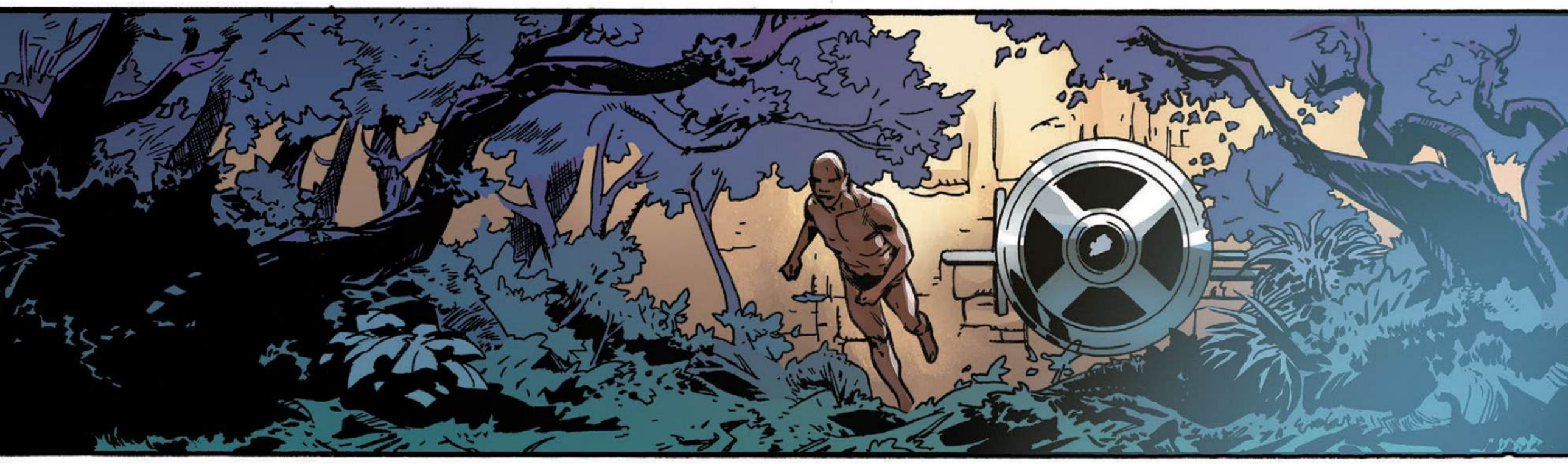
AARRGHHHH! EEEEEEEE!

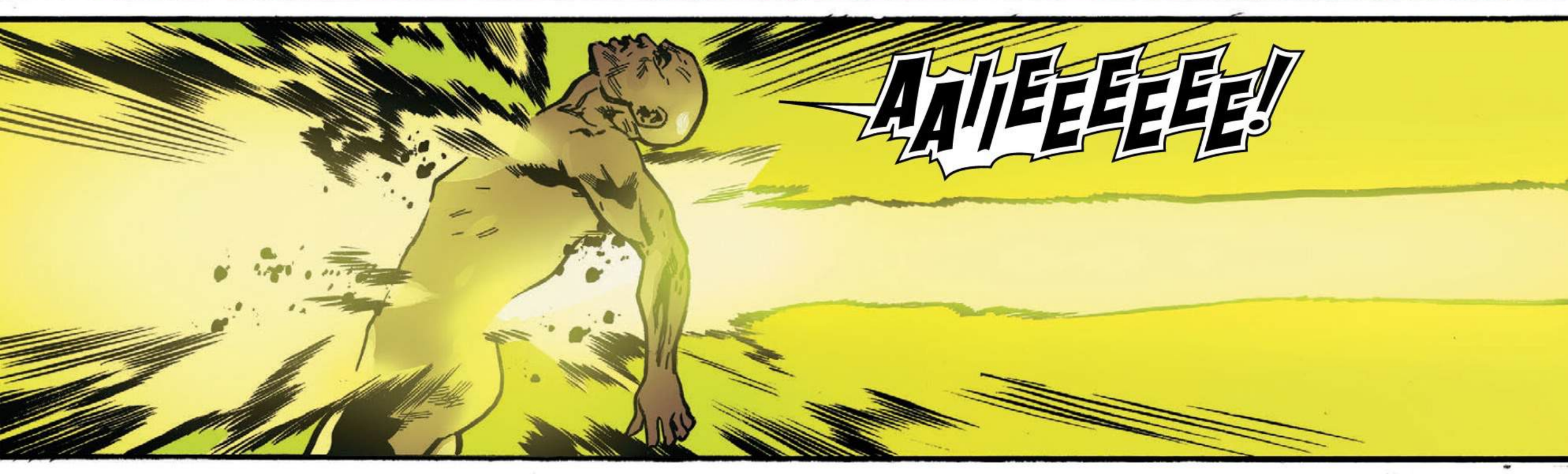
We... we...
I can't believe how bad this hurts... we just have to get clear.
We...
÷Sniff!÷

We've got company.
I have had enough of you mutants!

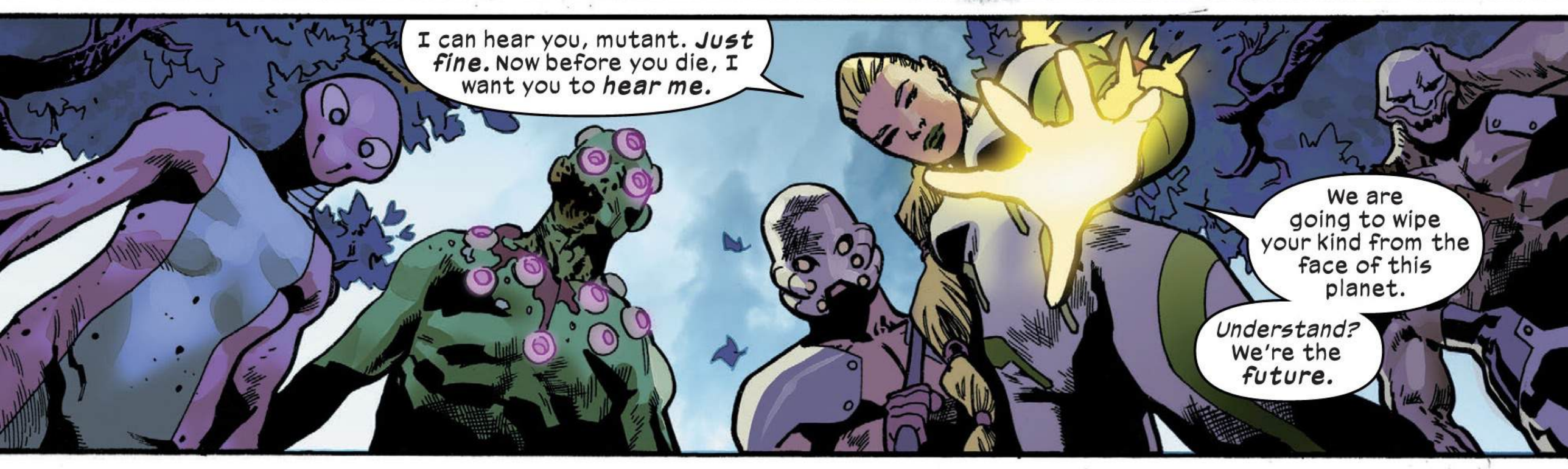


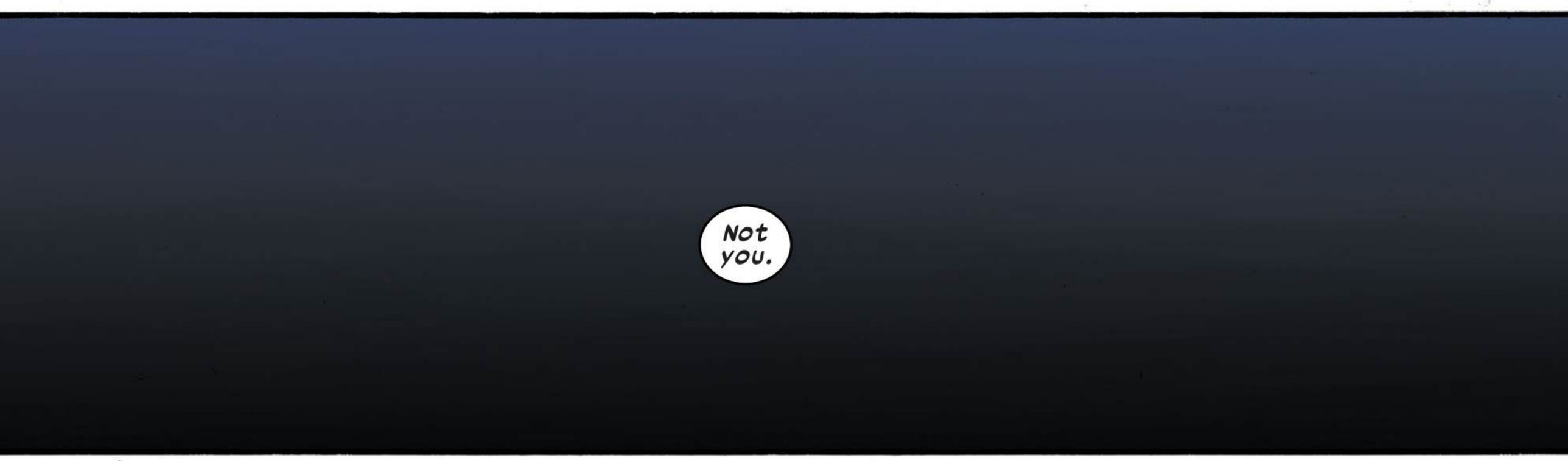

"...you saved *me* once...now let me save *you*."

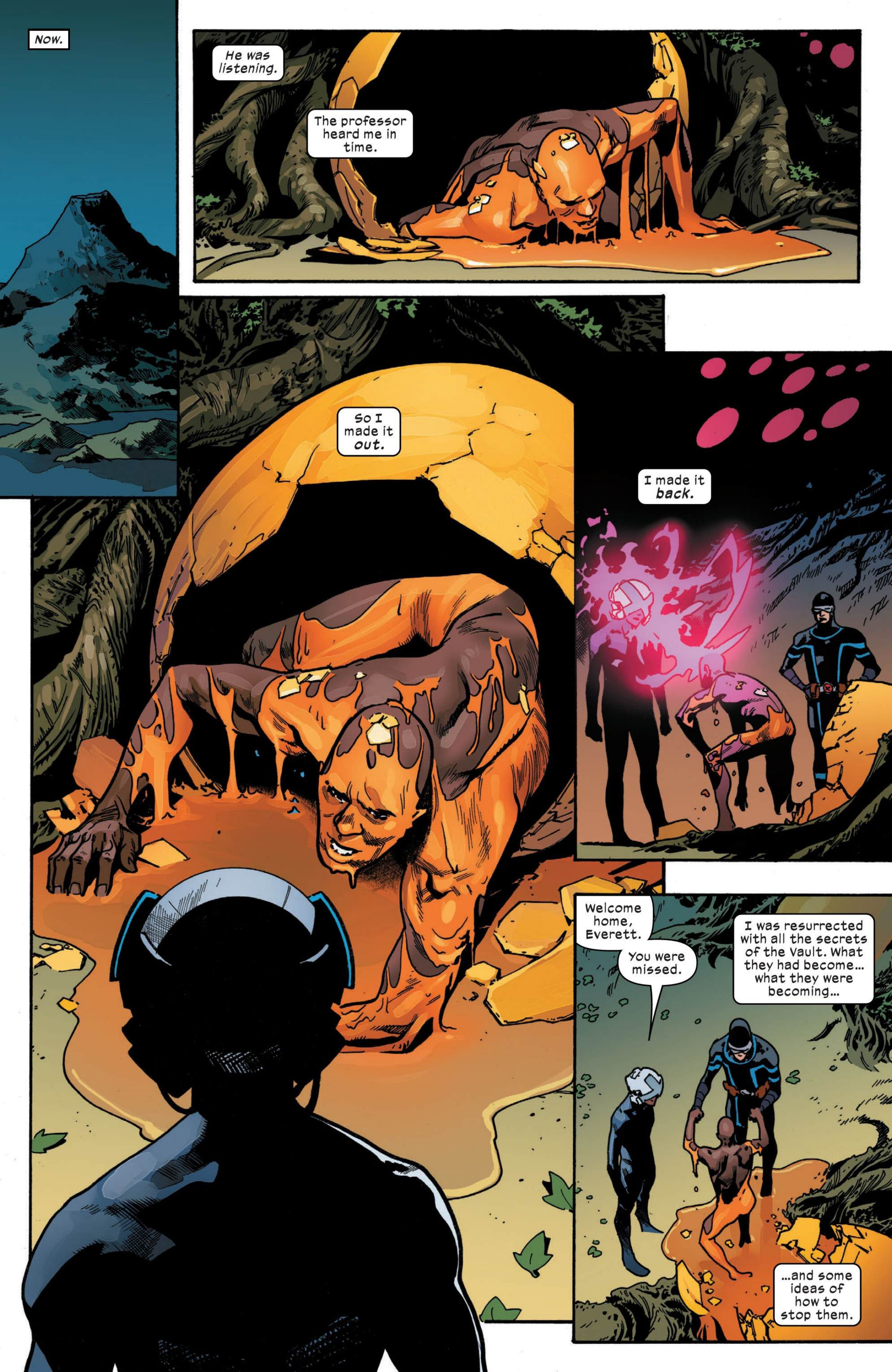


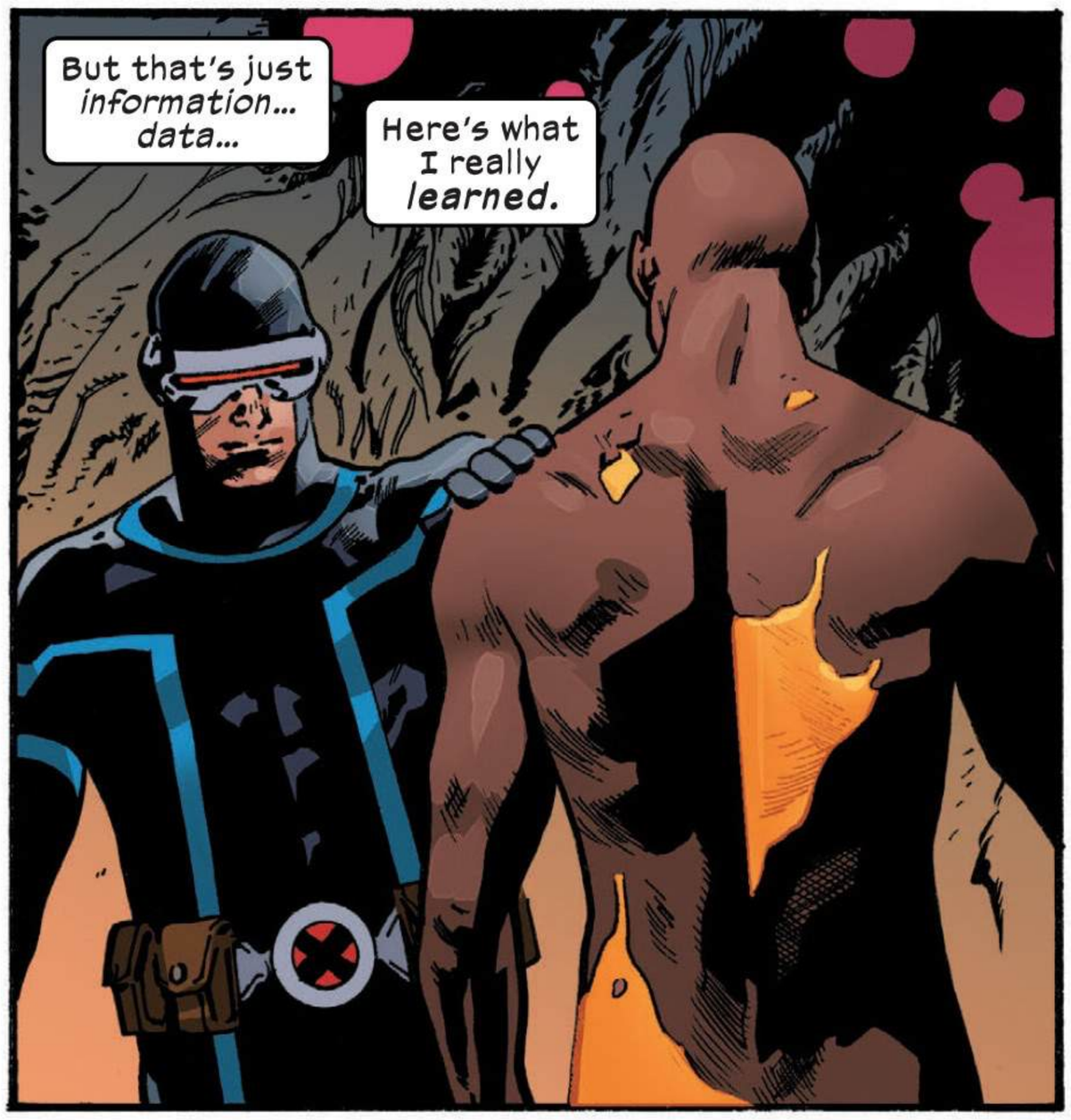

AAIEEEEE!

Professor...
Professor, can you hear me?


I can hear you, mutant. *Just fine.* Now before you die, I want you to *hear me.*
We are going to wipe your kind from the face of this planet.
*Understand?* We're the *future.*


Not you.


Now.
He was listening.
The professor heard me in time.
So I made it out.
I made it back.
Welcome home, Everett.
You were missed.
I was resurrected with all the secrets of the Vault. What they had become... what they were becoming...
...and some ideas of how to stop them.

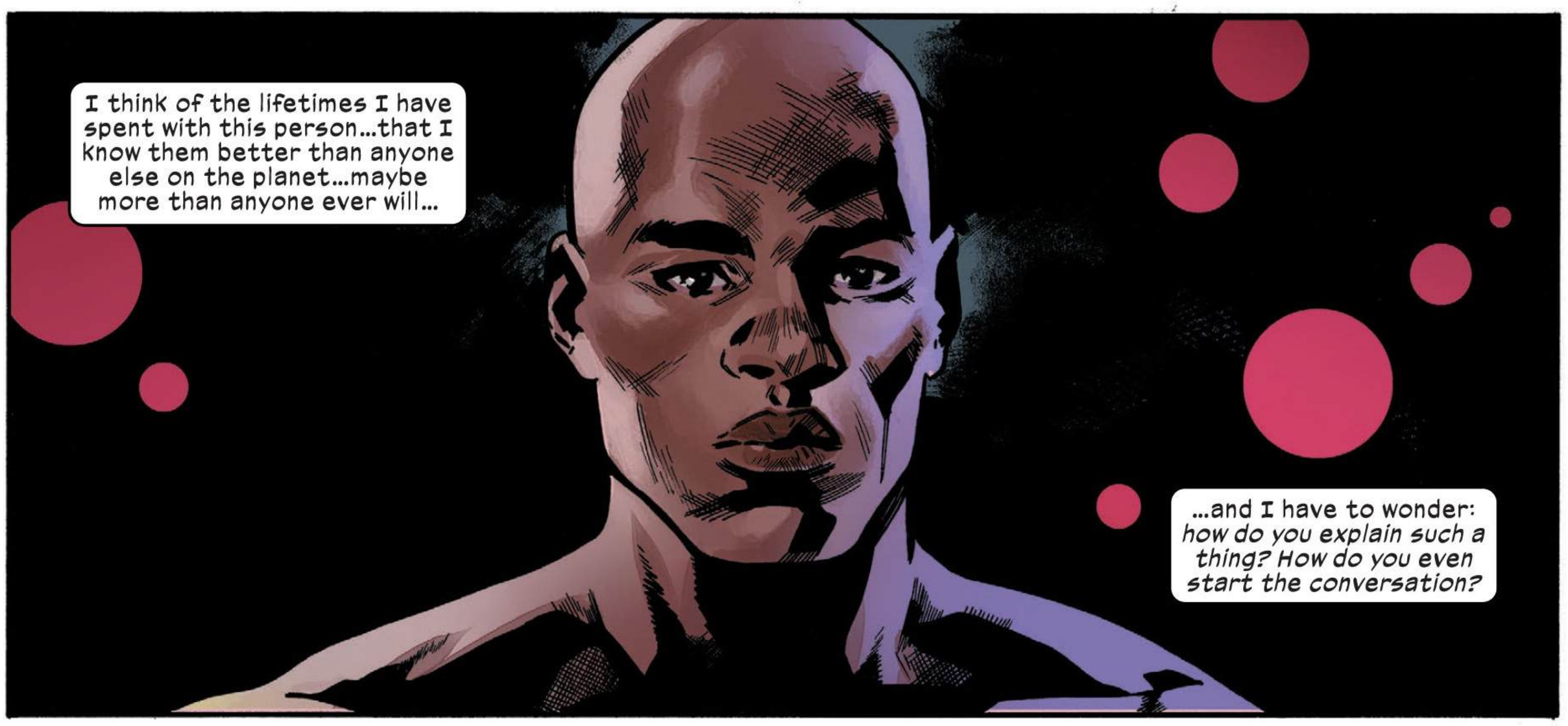

But that's just *information... data...*
Here's what I really *learned.*

*Friend, confidant, partner, lover...*those are ***human words*** to describe a ***human relationship*** measured in ***human years.***
I can still hear him...my father saying that he loved my mother so much he was willing to die for her.

*Human words.*
*Useless words.*

Love is not *dying* for someone...

*...it's living for them.*


I think of the lifetimes I have spent with this person...that I know them better than anyone else on the planet...maybe more than anyone ever will...
...and I have to wonder: *how do you explain such a thing? How do you even start the conversation?*

SNIKT
What are you *looking at?*

Yeah. Okay...
*That'll work.*

Chapter 22

# Lost Love

22

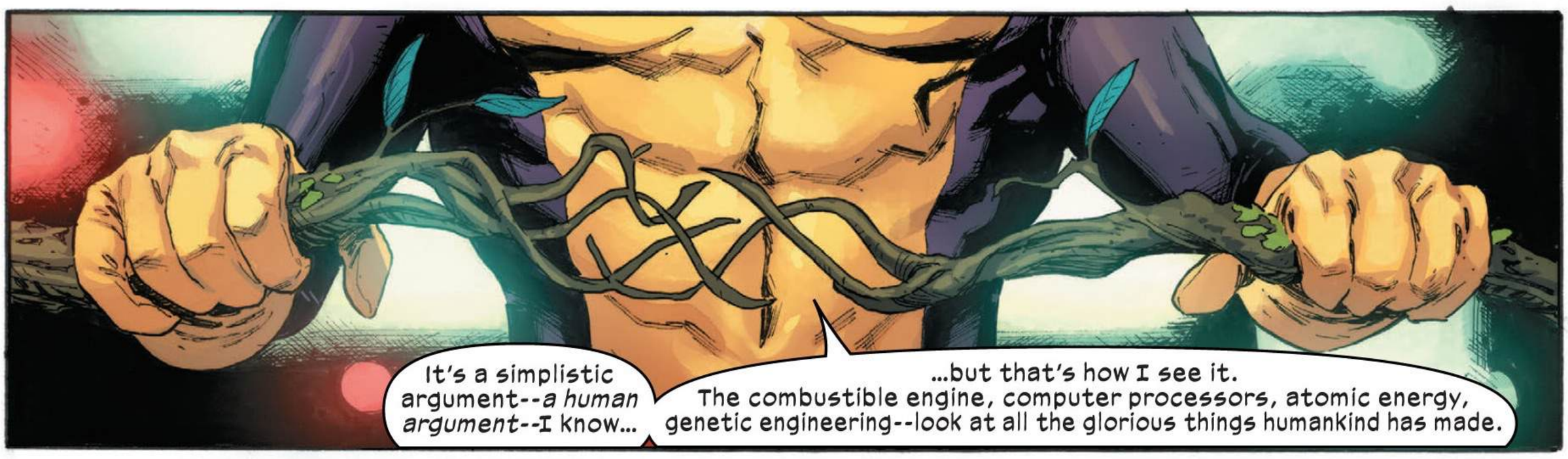
Then.
The Oracle.

"If I *understand* you correctly...

"...you're looking to make a bit of an *impression*."

Forge's Lab.
The problem is you tell that to a *creative person* like me, and, well, I can take it in *any number of ways.*
Because there's blowing stuff up...and then there's sowing razed earth with salt so as to never see life exist there again.
So...
...exactly how much of an *impression* are you looking to *make,* Raven?
I have... *annihilation on my mind.*
And when I look around *your lab,* I know I've come to the right *place.* But I can't help but wonder...
How do you sleep at night, surrounded by all of... *this?*
...
I sleep fine.
*Well.* That's no small feat.
And how do you manage *that?*

Think of a stick of wood. Yes, you could craft and shape something...
...or you could use it to beat someone to death.

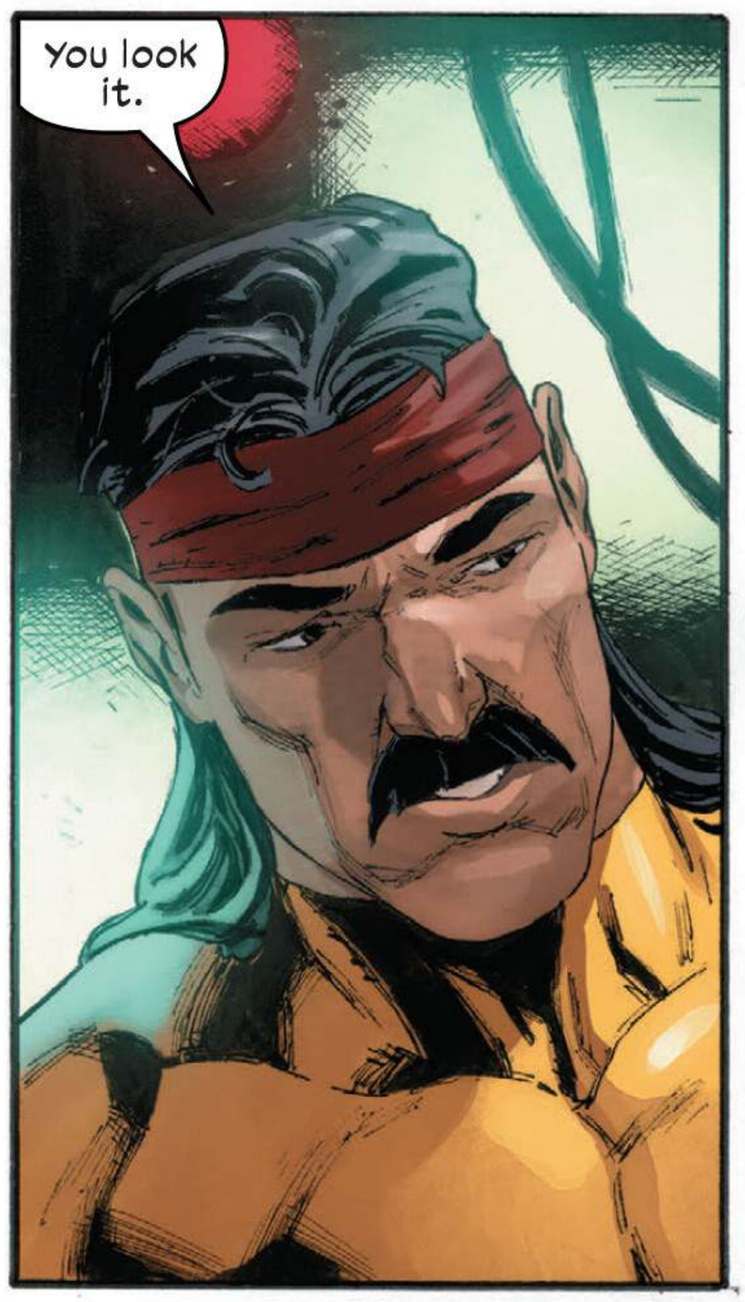

It's a simplistic argument--a human argument--I know...
...but that's how I see it. The combustible engine, computer processors, atomic energy, genetic engineering--look at all the glorious things humankind has made.

They take a useful tool, and then they find a way to use it for destruction--theirs and ours. That's what they do.
It's the lie they tell themselves. "We started with such good intentions."

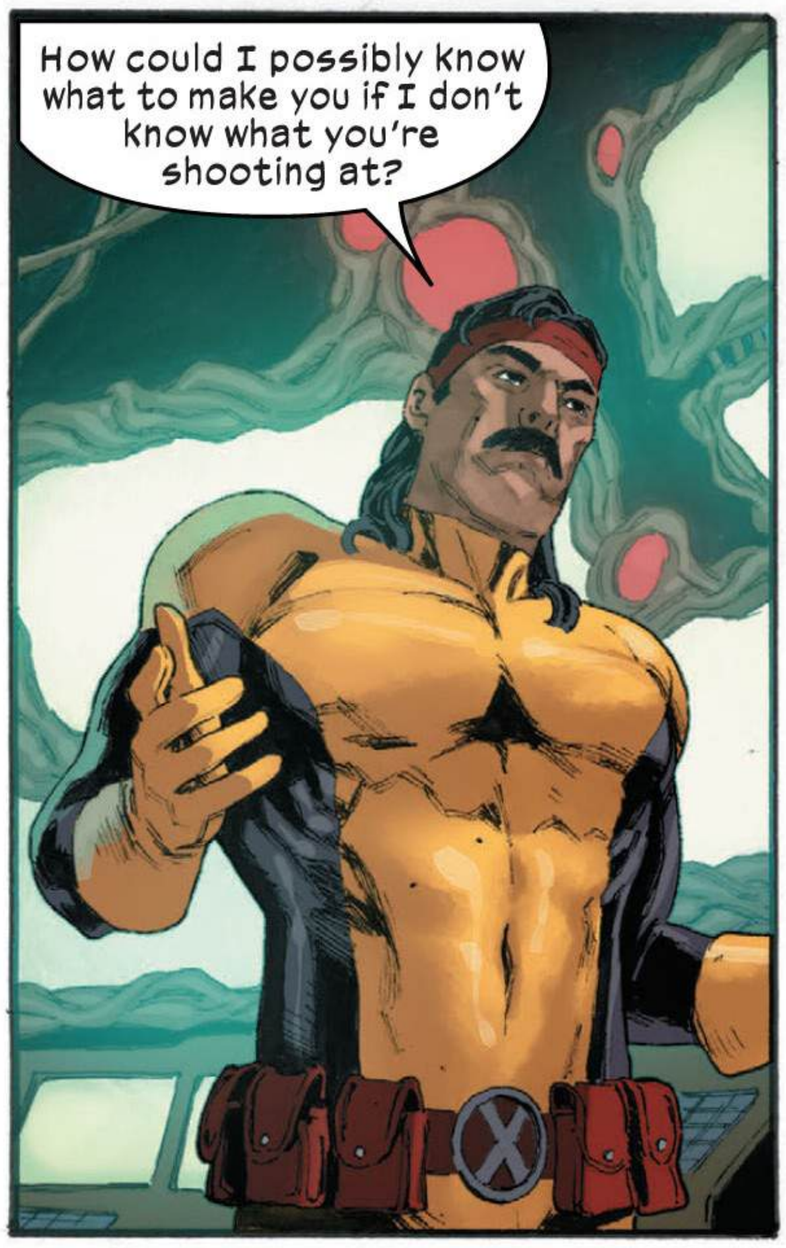
Well, I don't lie. When I make something, I make it with a singular function and purpose. Be it a tool or weapon.
Which brings us back to the stick.

In the end, it's not the instrument that matters...it's the one who wields it...
...and what kind of person they are.
And how are you sleeping at night, Raven?

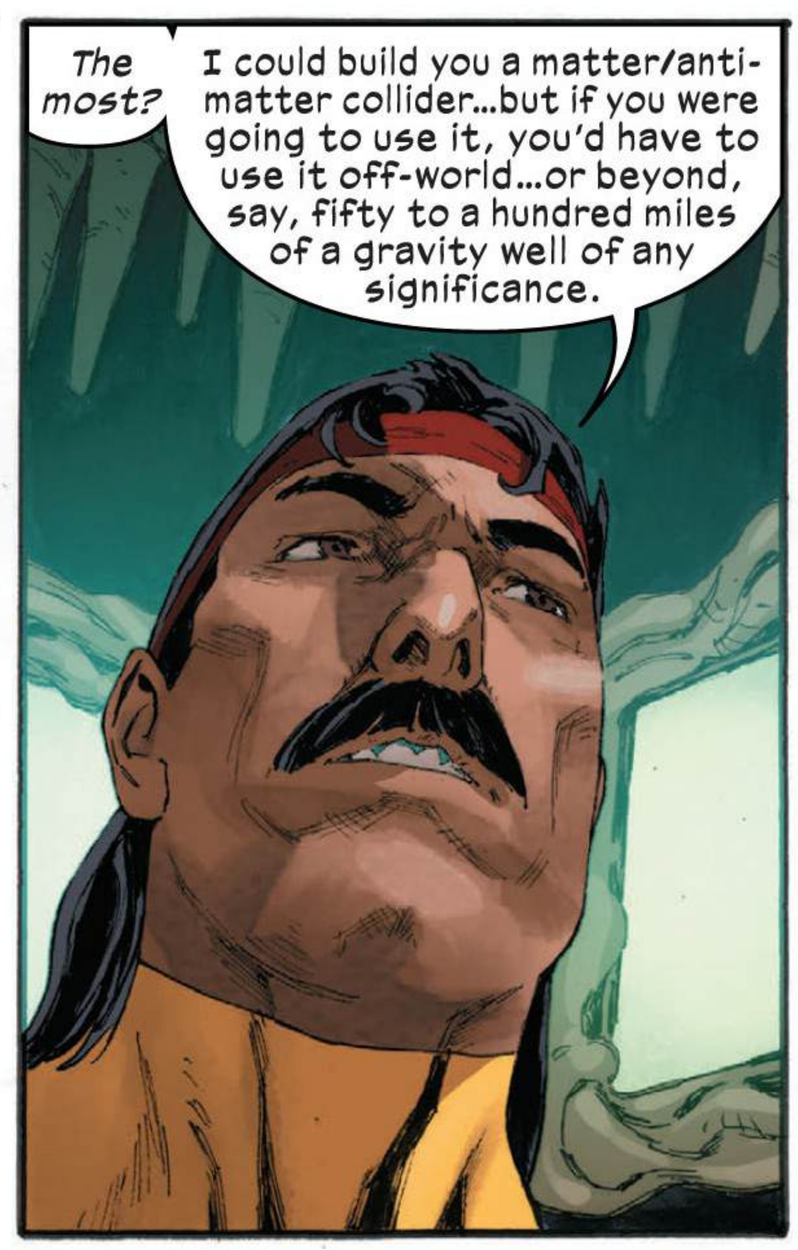
...
I sleep fine.

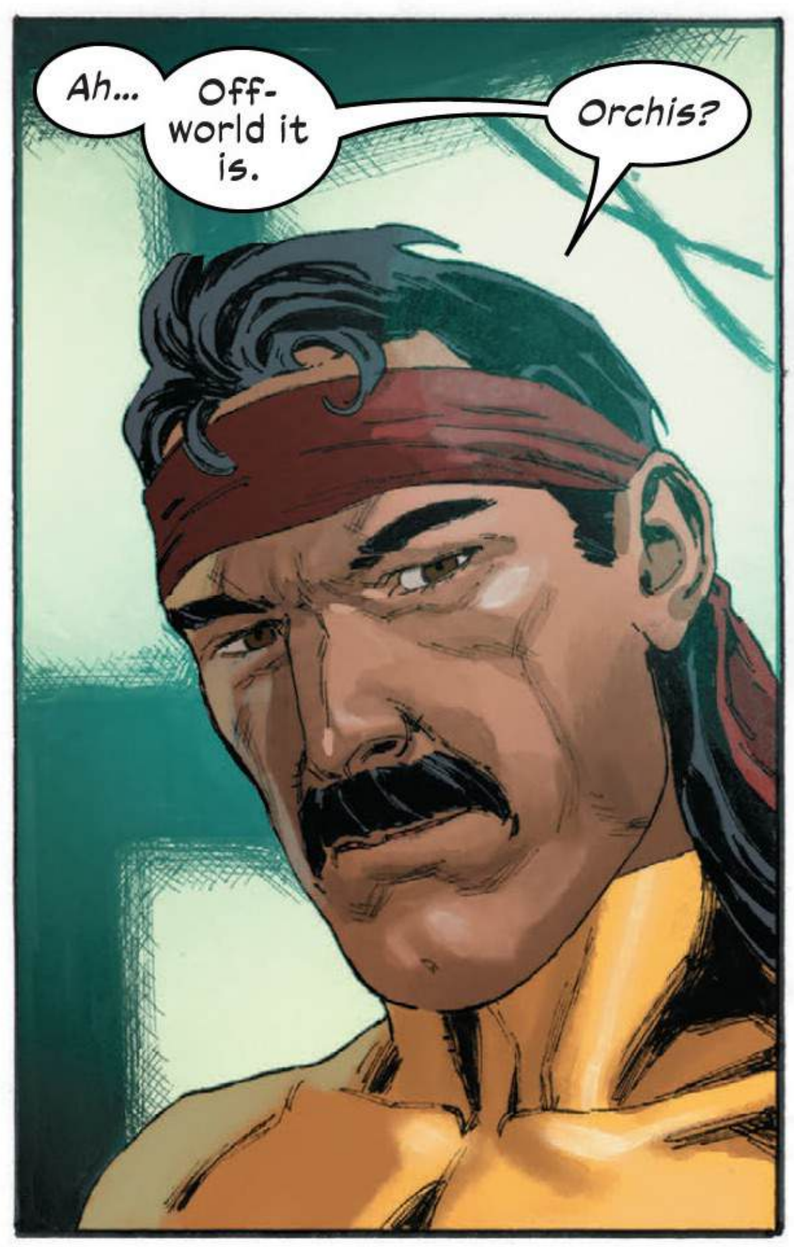

You look it.

Are you going to help me *or not?*
You know that I'm here with the authority of the Council--*on which I sit*--and if that wasn't enough, I know that Charles and Erik have personally told you to give me what I need.
So will you do that now? *Please.*

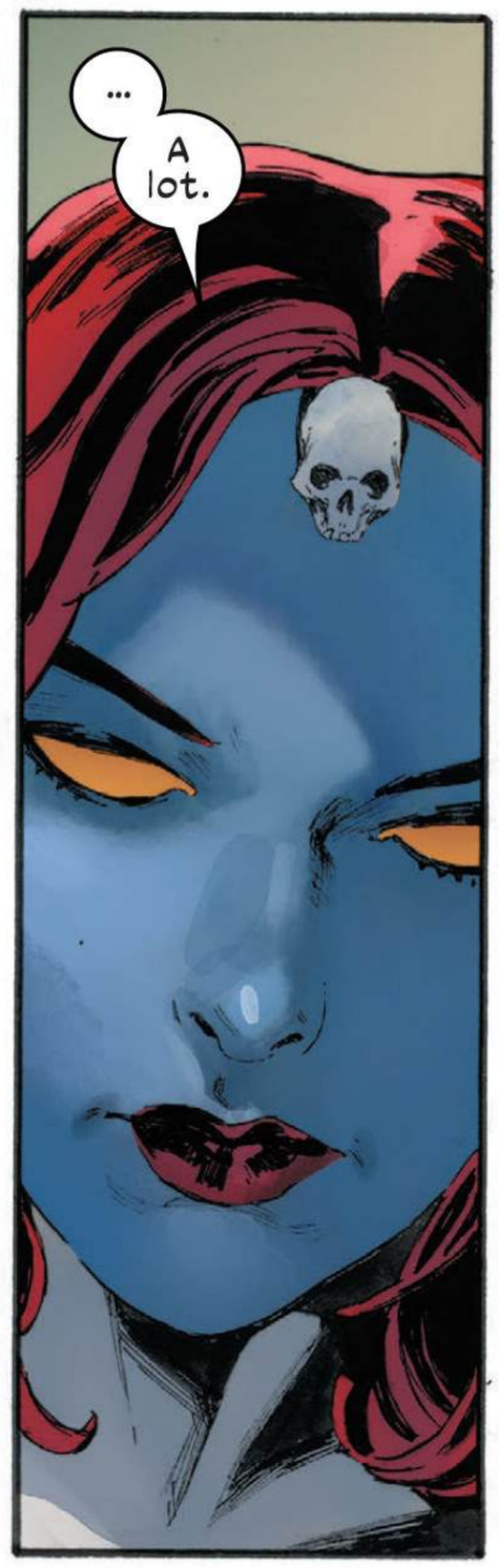

How could I possibly know what to make you if I don't know what you're shooting at?

*How about this?*
I'll take whatever does the ***most damage*** under ***every fathomable circumstance.***


*The most?*
I could build you a matter/anti-matter collider...but if you were going to use it, you'd have to use it off-world...or beyond, say, fifty to a hundred miles of a gravity well of any significance.


*Ah...*
Off-world it is.
*Orchis?*

*Orchis.*



It was a gun that turned *us* into *them*.

The exotic material makes it tricky...but I'll build you what you need.

It'll take a few weeks.

Now. The House of M.
"What is it?"
He calls it a microscopic singularity generator.
Apparently, when it goes off, it'll release a miniature black hole that will exist for a fractional amount of time before collapsing in on itself.
It will eat the Orchis Forge, but it won't be big or strong enough to reach Sentinel City or their system of orbital platforms.
Forge said we'd be risking the Sun with something larger.
Of course. Because if there's one thing this seems to be an exercise in... it's restraint.
This isn't some kind of selective surgery--it's cancer.
Cut it out, at the root. Treating it some other way does no one any good.
Leave no doubt. That's what you want here, isn't it?
It's possible that up to this point, we've overmanaged the job. As you're the one executing it, perhaps we should leave the details of the mission up to you.
In the end, the only thing that matters is preventing Nimrod from coming online.

So when the slaughter starts...you want your hands clean.
Such leadership.
...
This isn't servitude, Raven. We made a deal.
Any time you wish to end it, you can simply let us know that you're not the right tool for the job.
We have among us other monsters...
Some who do not lie to themselves about what they are.
Of course.
Like Erik said, we made a deal.
Only your failure prevents its completion.
When I return successful...
...you will have my wife moved to the front of the resurrection queue?

# A TILTING WITHIN

The X-MEN undertook a mission to destroy the Orchis Forge, a space station with the capacity to create Nimrod, a highly advanced mutant-killing robot. They appeared to succeed, but a secret undertaking by Mystique -- assigned to her by Professor X and Magneto -- uncovered that the mission had not, in fact, stopped Orchis' Dr. Alia Gregor from 'beginning to develop' Nimrod.

While Mystique held up her end of the agreement, Professor X and Magneto did not, refusing to resurrect Mystique's wife, Destiny. And Mystique... will not be denied.

Mystique

Professor X

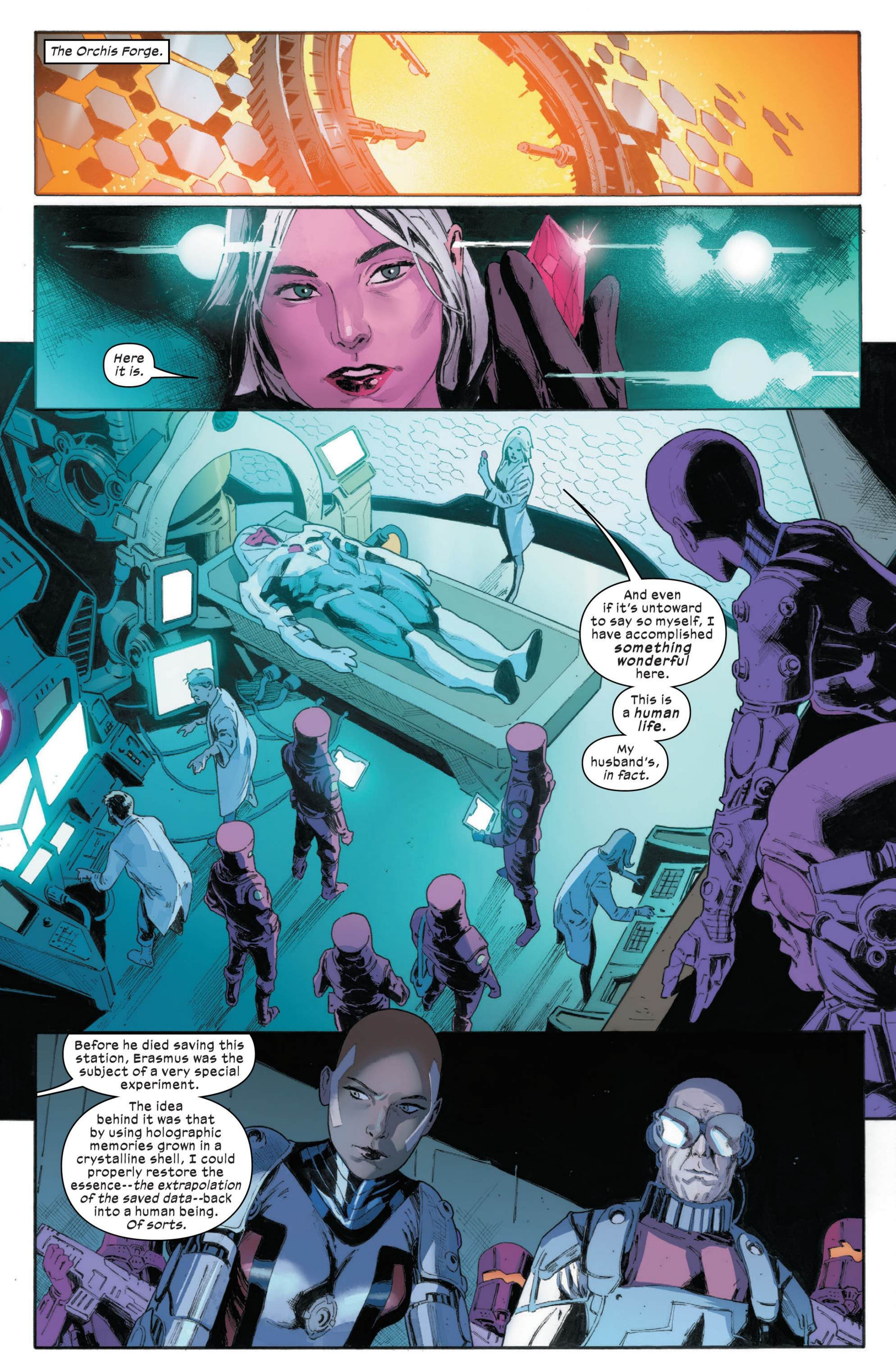
Forge

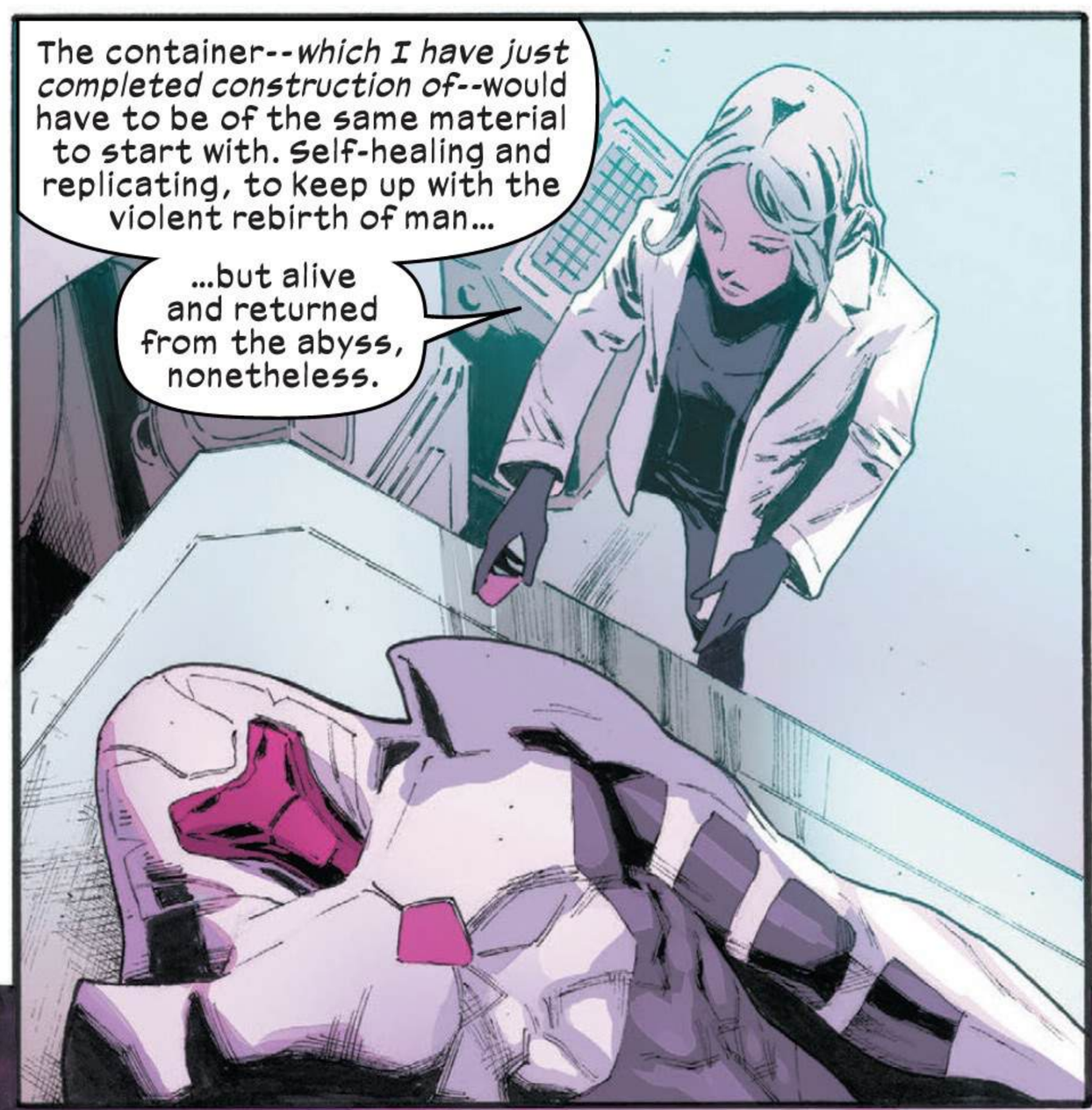
Magneto

Dr. Gregor

Omega Sentinel

Dr. Devo


The Orchis Forge.
Here it is.
And even if it's untoward to say so myself, I have accomplished *something wonderful* here.
This is a *human life.*
My husband's, *in fact.*
Before he died saving this station, Erasmus was the subject of a very special experiment.
The idea behind it was that by using holographic memories grown in a crystalline shell, I could properly restore the essence--*the extrapolation of the saved data*--back into a human being. *Of sorts.*



"And yet, my only concern...is love.

"Come back to me, Erasmus.

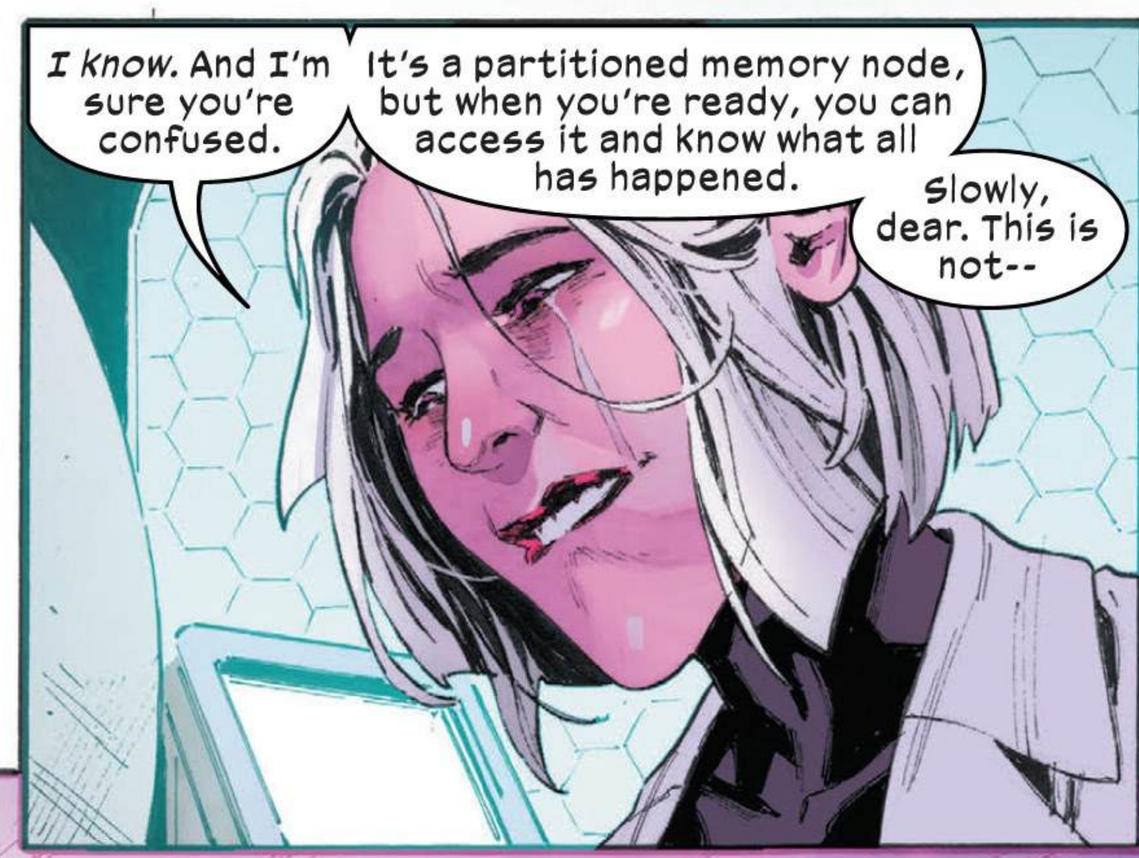
"Come back."

...

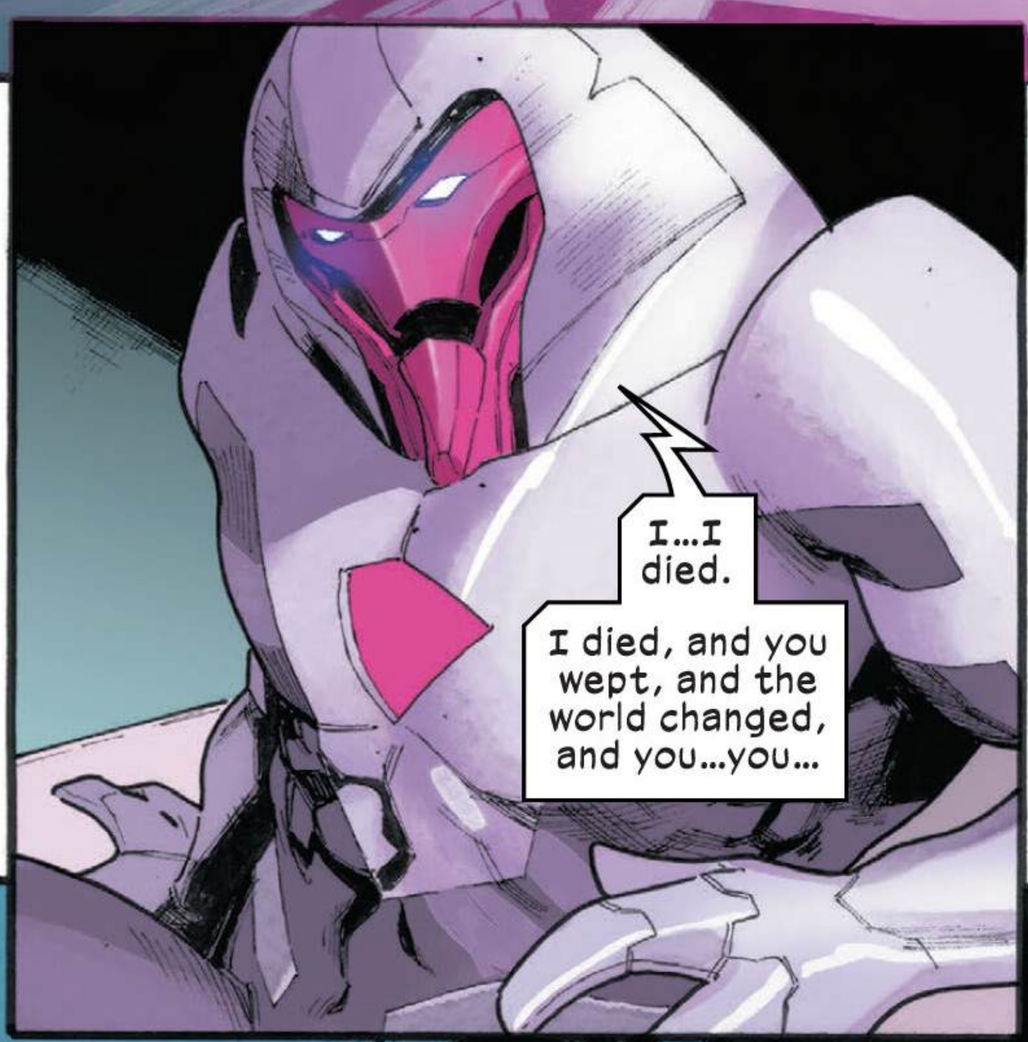
...

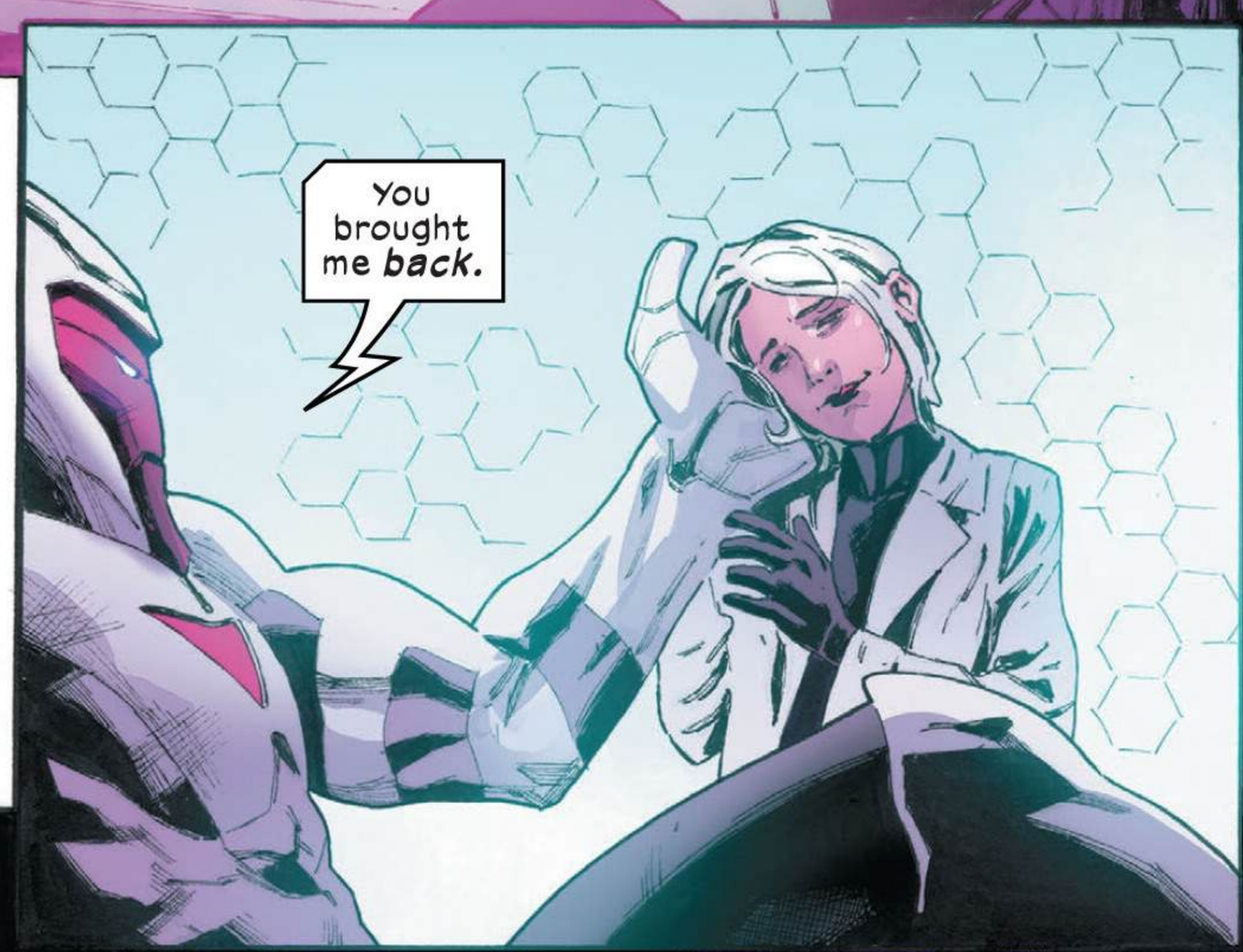
Alia?

I feel so... *strange.*

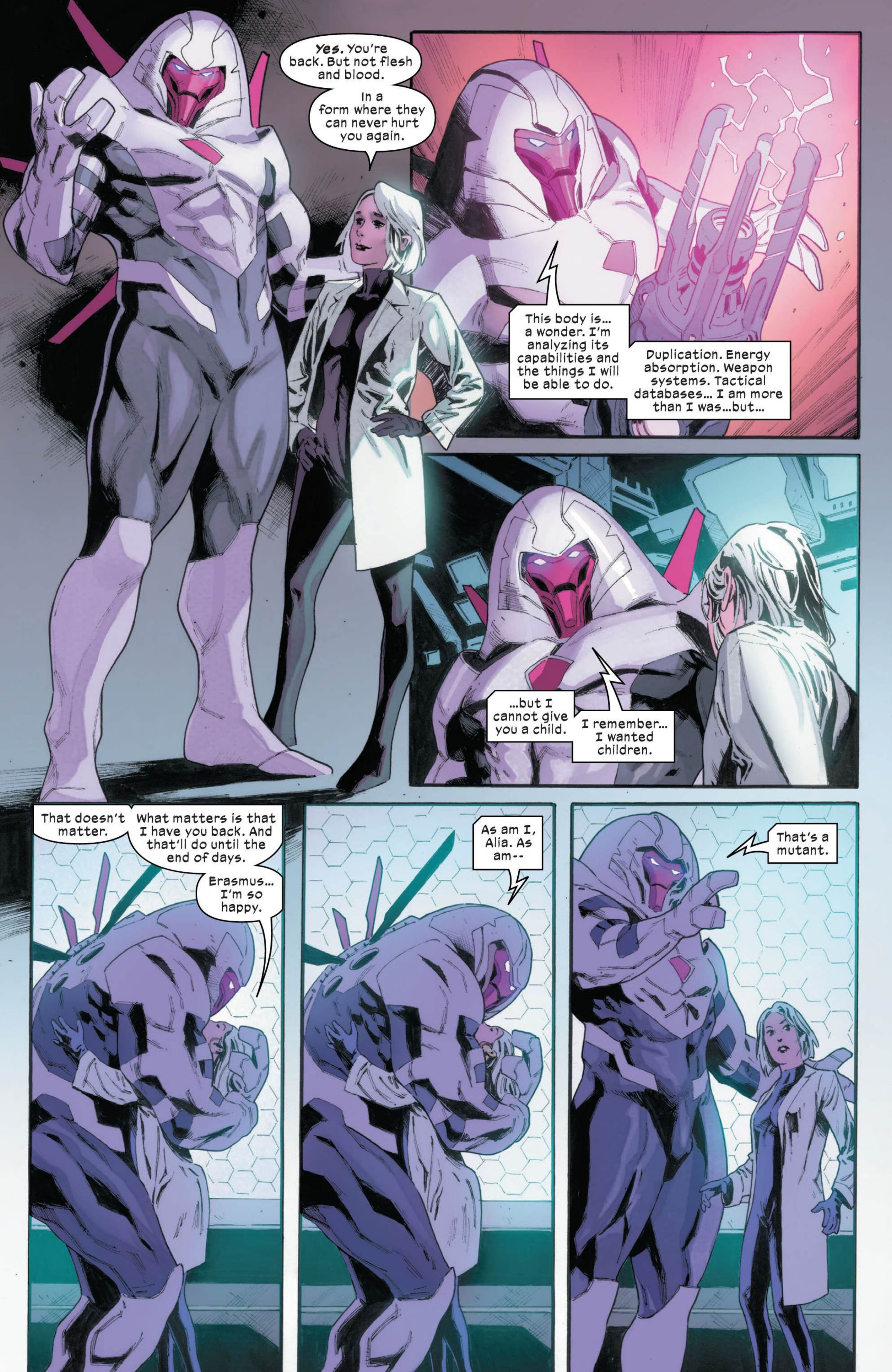

*I know.* And I'm sure you're confused.
It's a partitioned memory node, but when you're ready, you can access it and know what all has happened.
Slowly, dear. This is not--

HHRRKKK!


I...I died.
I died, and you wept, and the world changed, and you...you...


You brought me *back.*

Amazing.
The implications are... staggering...
...
Yes, they are.


Yes. You're back. But not flesh and blood.
In a form where they can never hurt you again.
This body is... a wonder. I'm analyzing its capabilities and the things I will be able to do.
Duplication. Energy absorption. Weapon systems. Tactical databases... I am more than I was...but...
...but I cannot give you a child.
I remember... I wanted children.
That doesn't matter.
What matters is that I have you back. And that'll do until the end of days.
Erasmus... I'm so happy.
As am I, Alia. As am--
That's a mutant.

@#%&!
Move away from that person.
ZZZAFFF
Don't bother... I'll move myself.
ZAF
ZAF
AAIIEEEEEE!
Behind me.
Congratulations on all your success. It's quite an achievement.
I'll make sure you're fully credited...when I carve it on your tombstone.
CLICK

TINK

Get the director to safety.

*Duplicate.*

I'll handle this.

*And* I'll handle the mutant.

I'd ask what it is...but I know a bomb when I see one.

Yes. But this... this is more.

Hard shield, atomic decay, antiprotons...

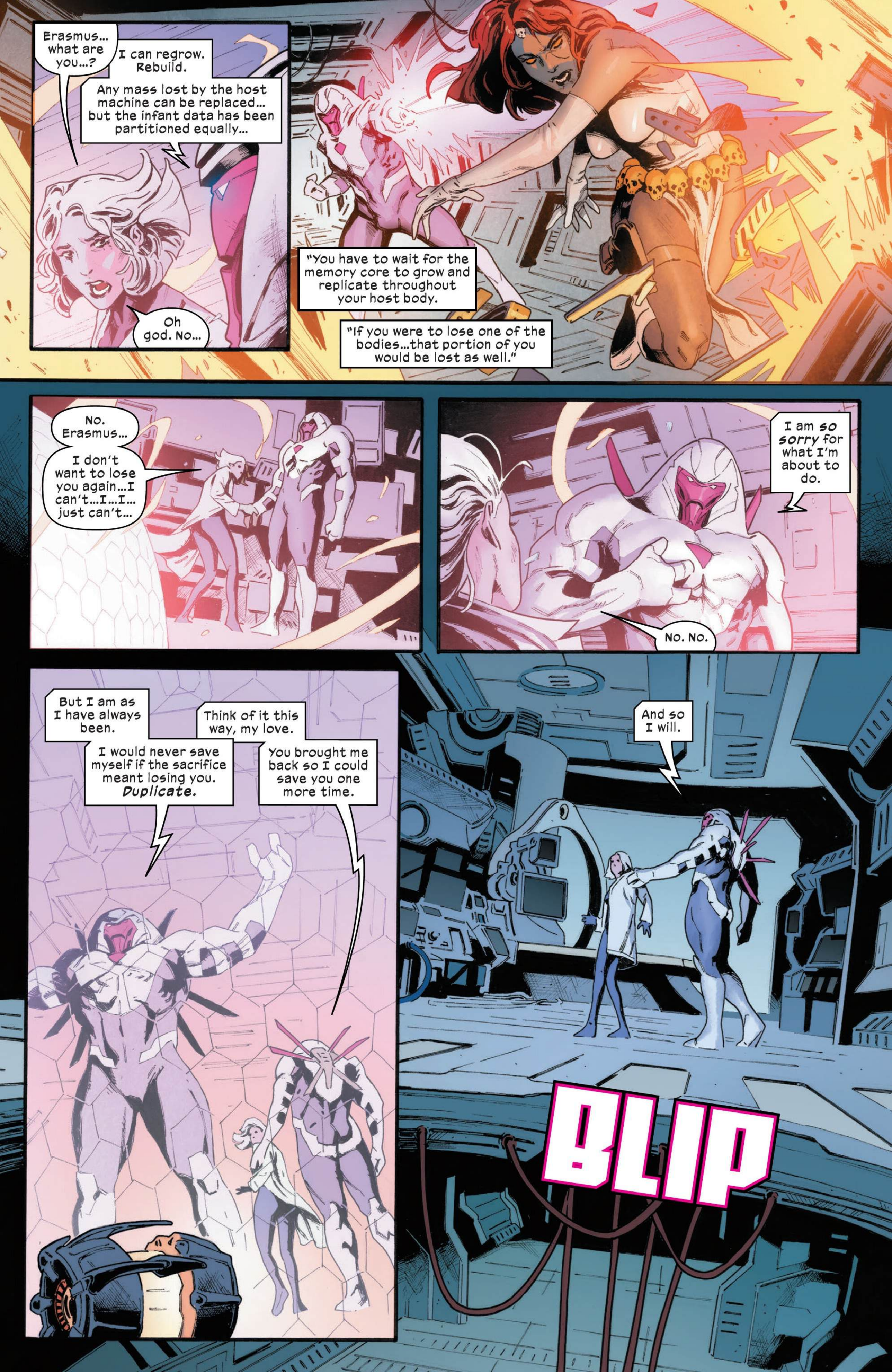
*Singularity.*

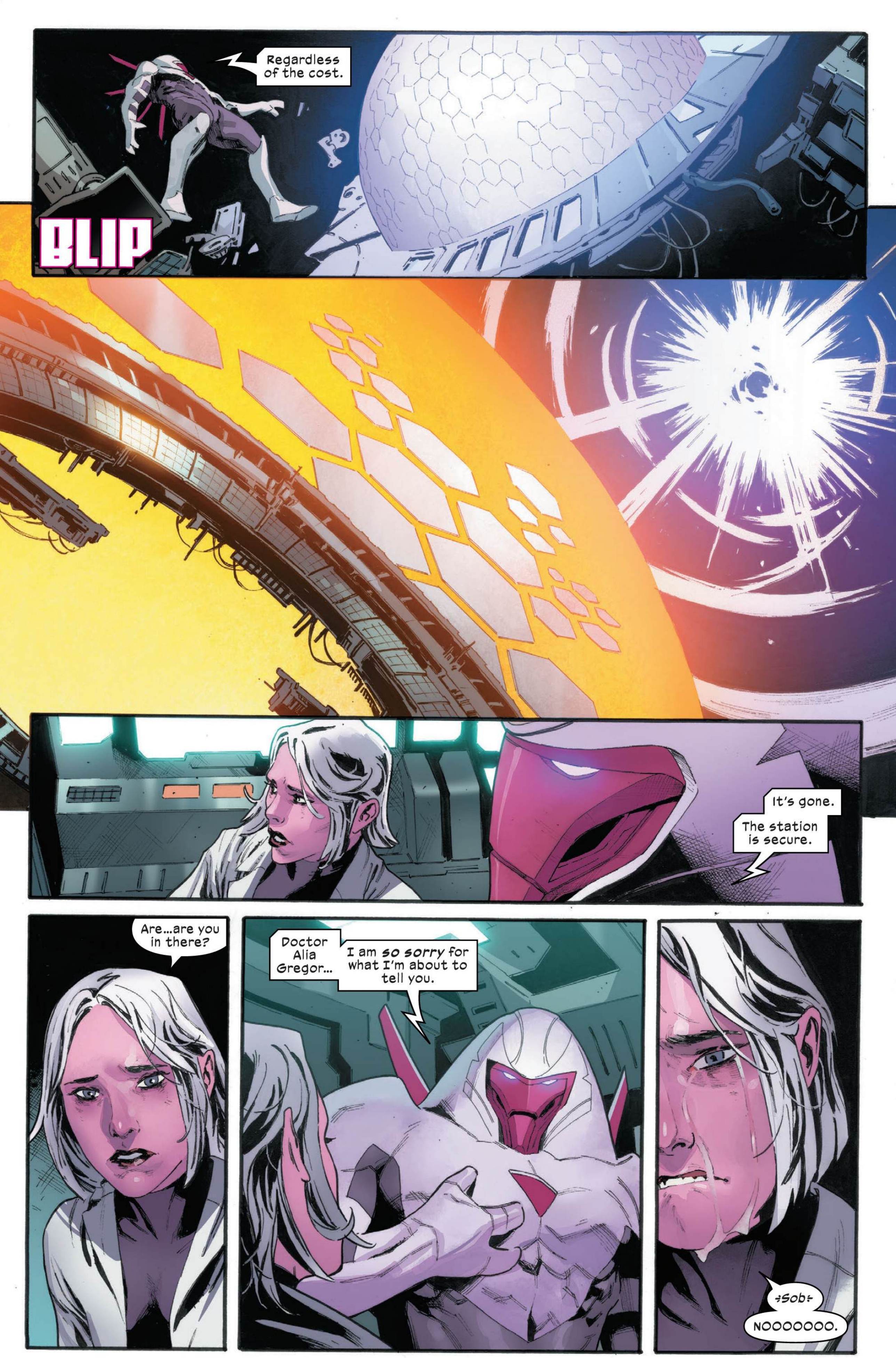
*It's meant to destroy the entire station?*

Yes.

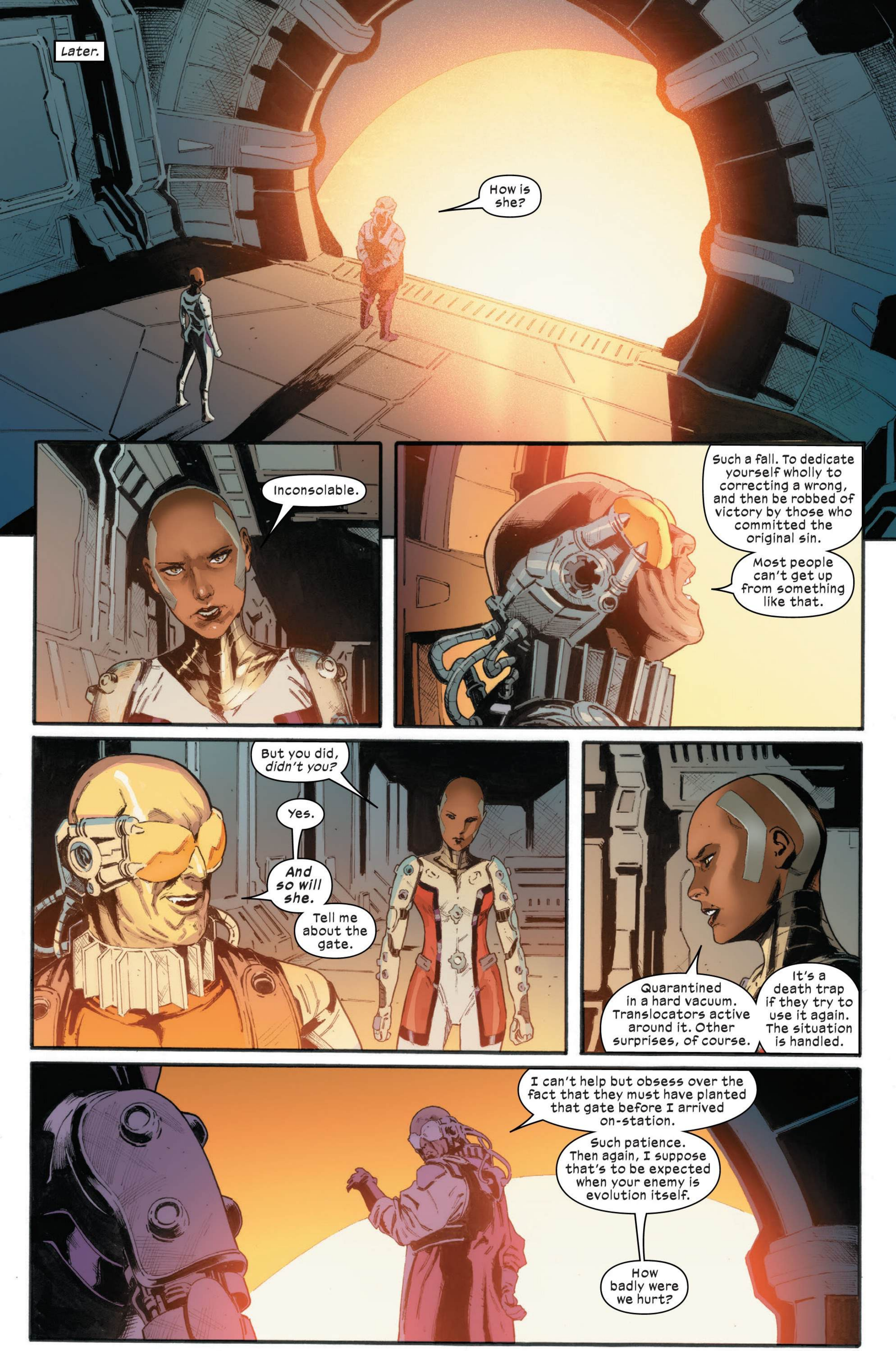
"You built this body with an internal translocator... it uses the mass of this machine as a counter lever.

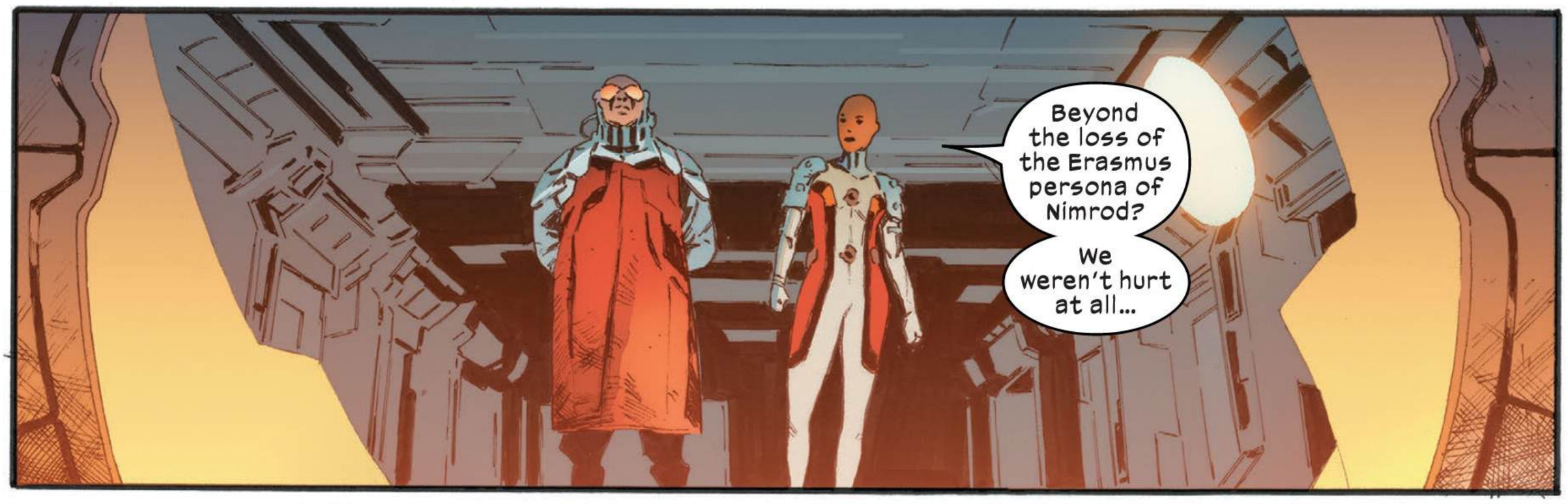
"Matter displacement."

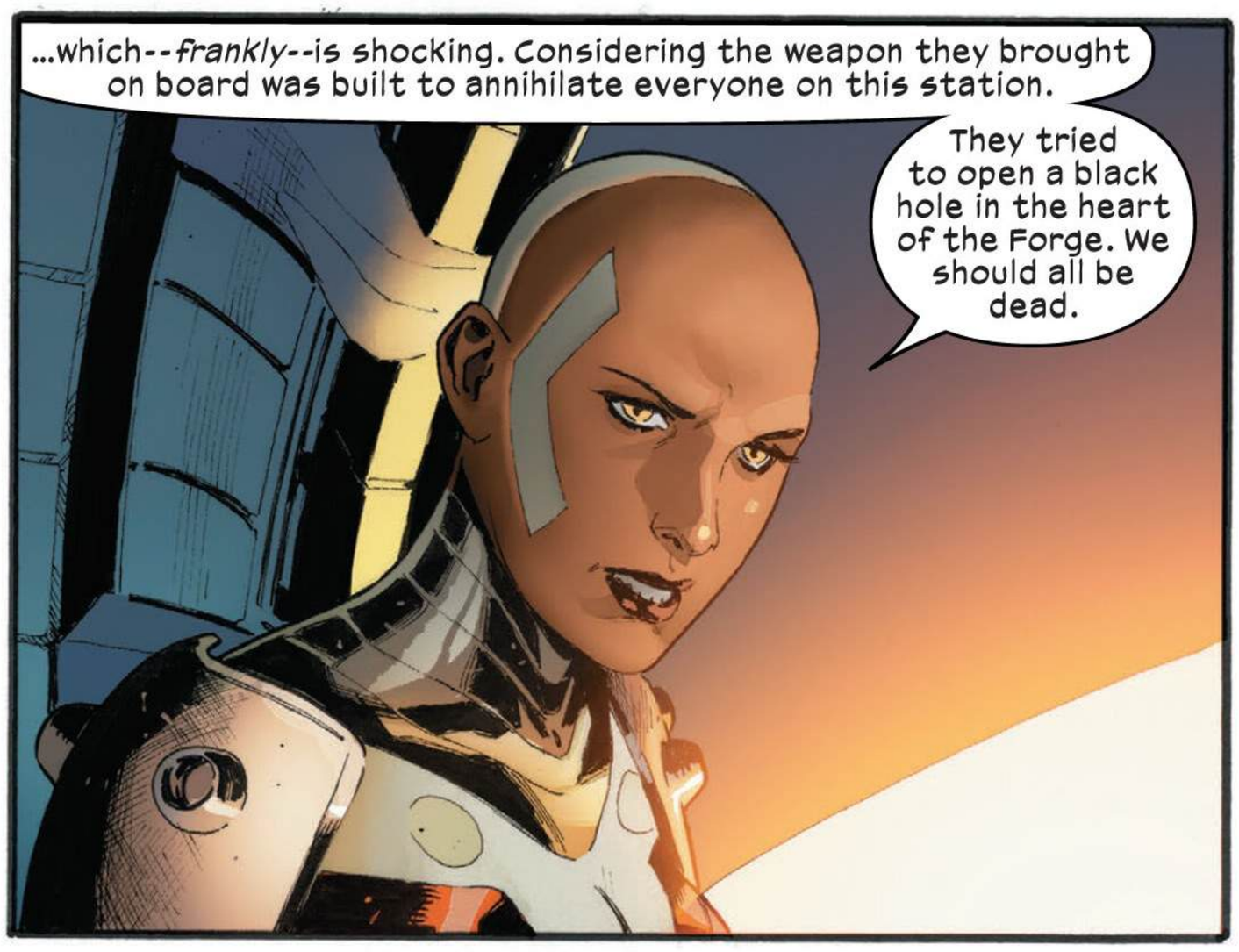

Erasmus... what are you...?
I can regrow. Rebuild.
Any mass lost by the host machine can be replaced... but the infant data has been partitioned equally...
Oh god. No...
"You have to wait for the memory core to grow and replicate throughout your host body.
"If you were to lose one of the bodies...that portion of you would be lost as well."
No. Erasmus...
I don't want to lose you again...I can't...I...I... just can't...
I am so sorry for what I'm about to do.
NO. NO.
But I am as I have always been.
Think of it this way, my love.
I would never save myself if the sacrifice meant losing you. Duplicate.
You brought me back so I could save you one more time.
And so I will.
BLIP


Regardless of the cost.
BLIP
It's gone.
The station is secure.
Are...are you in there?
Doctor Alia Gregor...
I am so sorry for what I'm about to tell you.
+Sob+
NOOOOOOO.

GHURRKK!
Look at me, mutant.
You have failed.
When you return home, tell your masters that today I was born into existence...
...and the first thing I experienced beyond the love of my creator was pain and loss at your hands.
I am Nimrod...the hunter.
ZZAKKKK
"You were here at my beginning.
"I swear... I will see to your end."
...


Later.
How is she?
Inconsolable.
Such a fall. To dedicate yourself wholly to correcting a wrong, and then be robbed of victory by those who committed the original sin.
Most people can't get up from something like that.
But you did, didn't you?
Yes.
And so will she.
Tell me about the gate.
Quarantined in a hard vacuum. Translocators active around it. Other surprises, of course.
It's a death trap if they try to use it again. The situation is handled.
I can't help but obsess over the fact that they must have planted that gate before I arrived on-station.
Such patience. Then again, I suppose that's to be expected when your enemy is evolution itself.
How badly were we hurt?


Beyond the loss of the Erasmus persona of Nimrod?
We weren't hurt at all...


...which--*frankly*--is shocking. Considering the weapon they brought on board was built to annihilate everyone on this station.
They tried to open a black hole in the heart of the Forge. We should all be dead.

*Hahahahaha.*
What a joy. What a *revelation.*

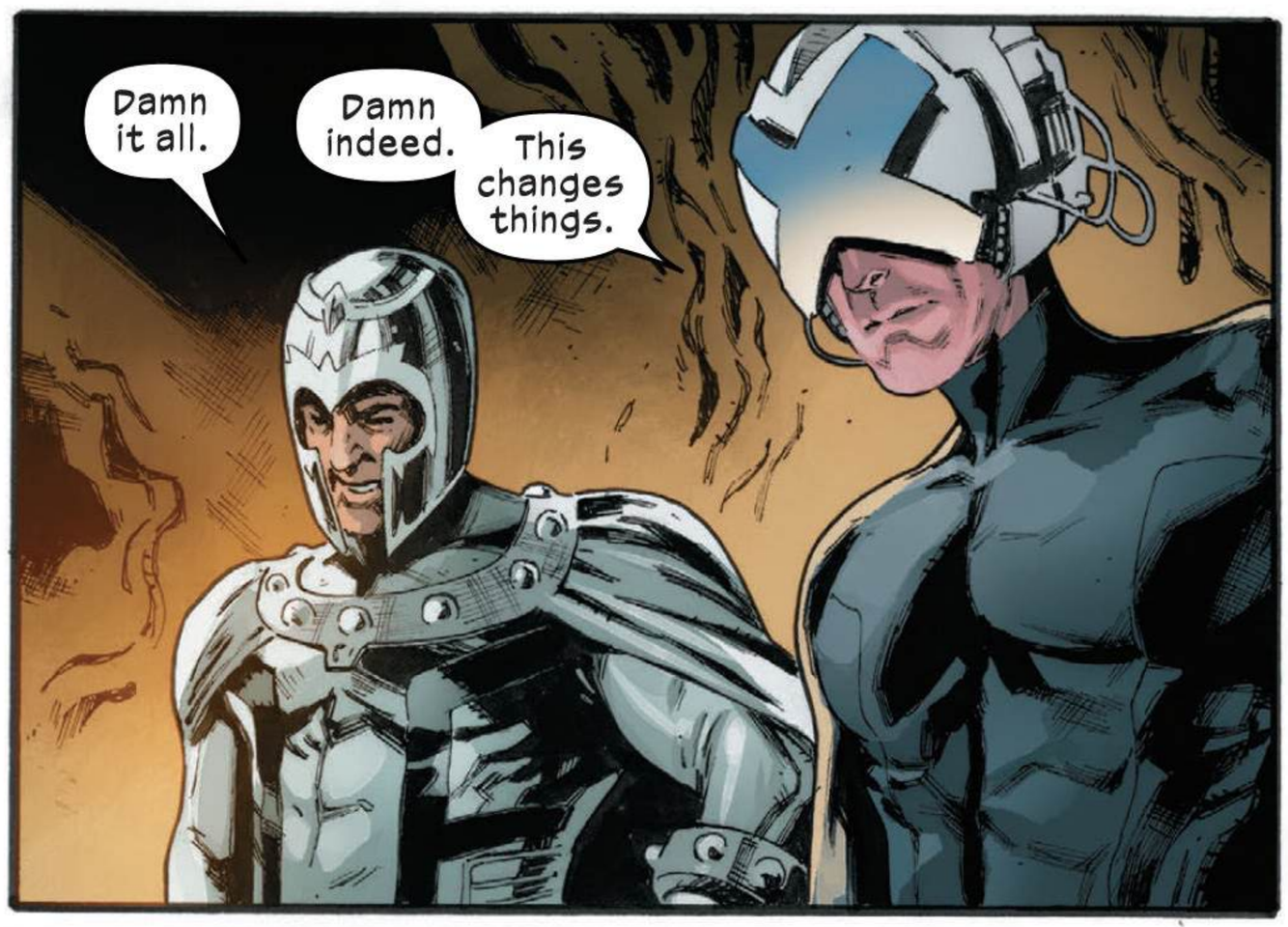
Excuse me?
Yes, they hate us, and we hate them. That's the current state of mutant and man.
But all their arrogance. The bravado. The bold declarations of inevitability.
Don't you see, Omega? Those words are in conflict with their actions. It's obvious, isn't it? They don't just *hate us...*

...they *fear us.*

Krakoa.

We tried to save you, but you died of your wounds immediately after you returned.
But now you are reborn, Raven. So tell us...

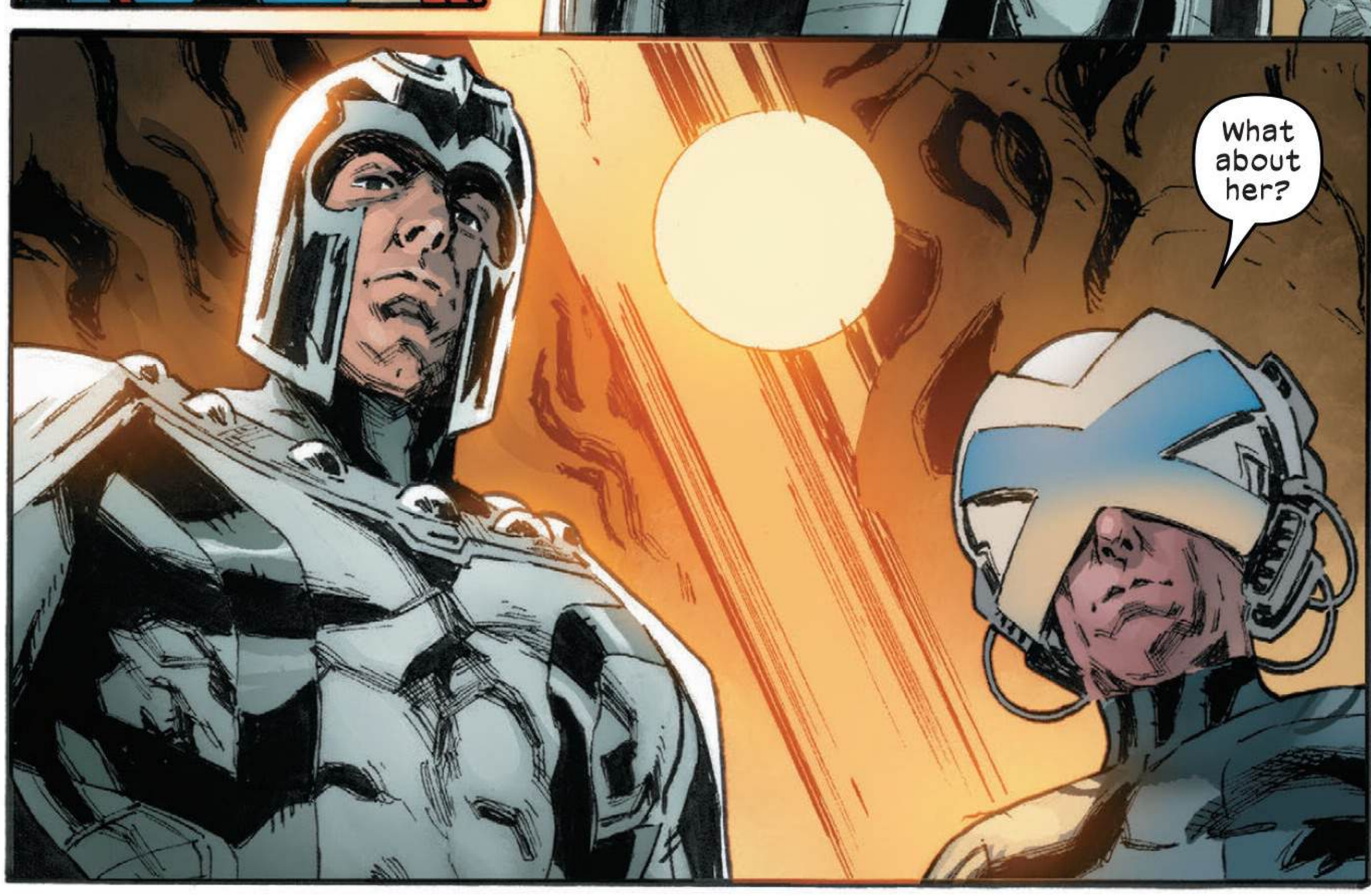
...what happened?
You backed up my mind. You know what happened.
We want to hear you say it.
I... I... I failed.
It's online...
Nimrod's online.


Damn it all.
Damn indeed.
This changes things.

In the short term it clarifies others, I suppose.
We'll need to--
Yes. No point in putting it off. We should do it now.

Wait.
What...

What about Irene?


What about her?

"There will be an island--not the first, but *the last.*

"This place will seem to be hope for our kind.
"When those days come, remember these words: BRING ME BACK.
"And if you cannot...if they will not...
Irenie Adler's Libris Veritorum Volume 6 June
"...then burn that place to the ground."

LEINIL

Chapter 23

# The Beginning

23

8:12 P.M.
Reception.

Another drink, sir?

Yes. And be sure to make your return *often* and the pour *generous*.

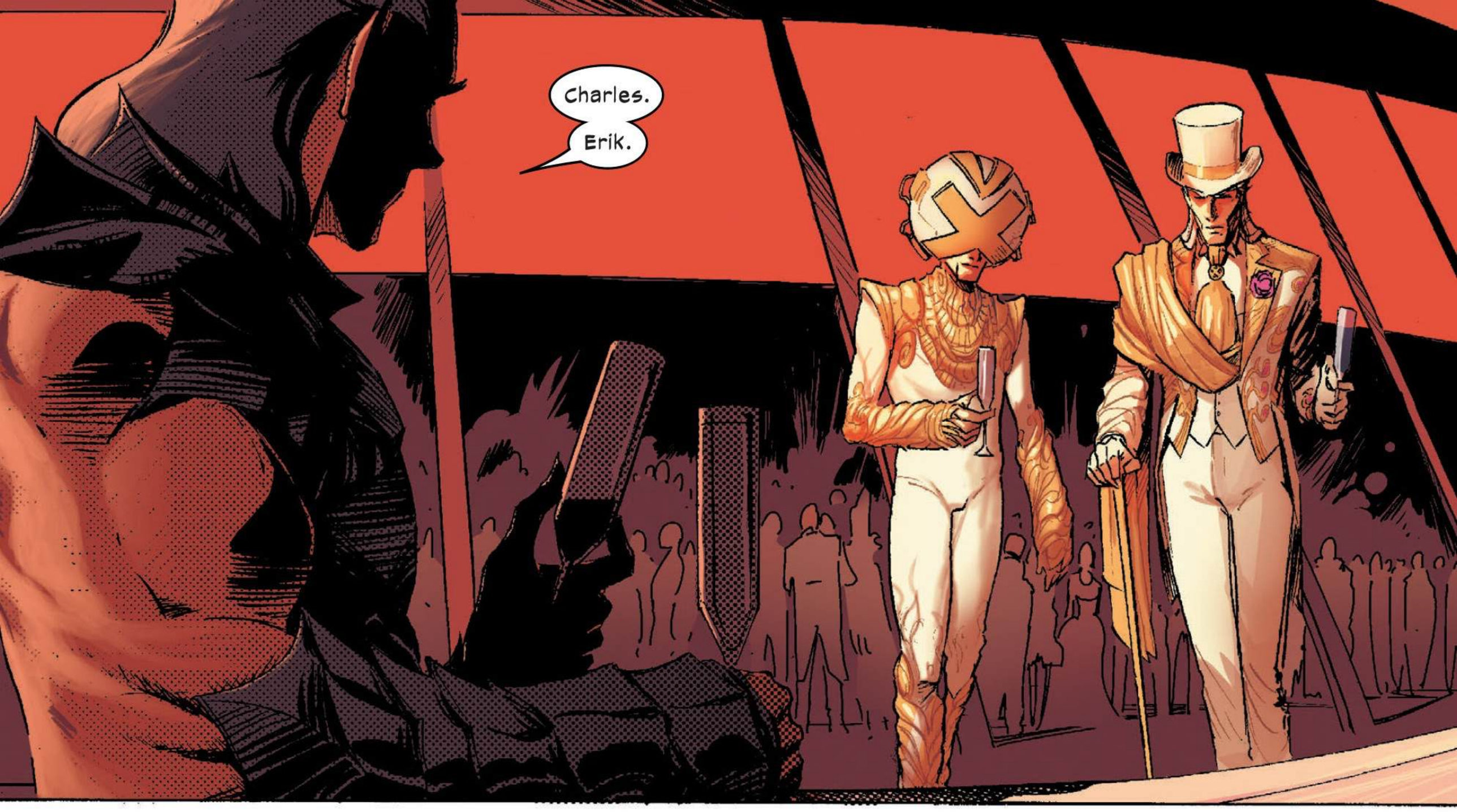
I fear it may be the only way we two get through this night.

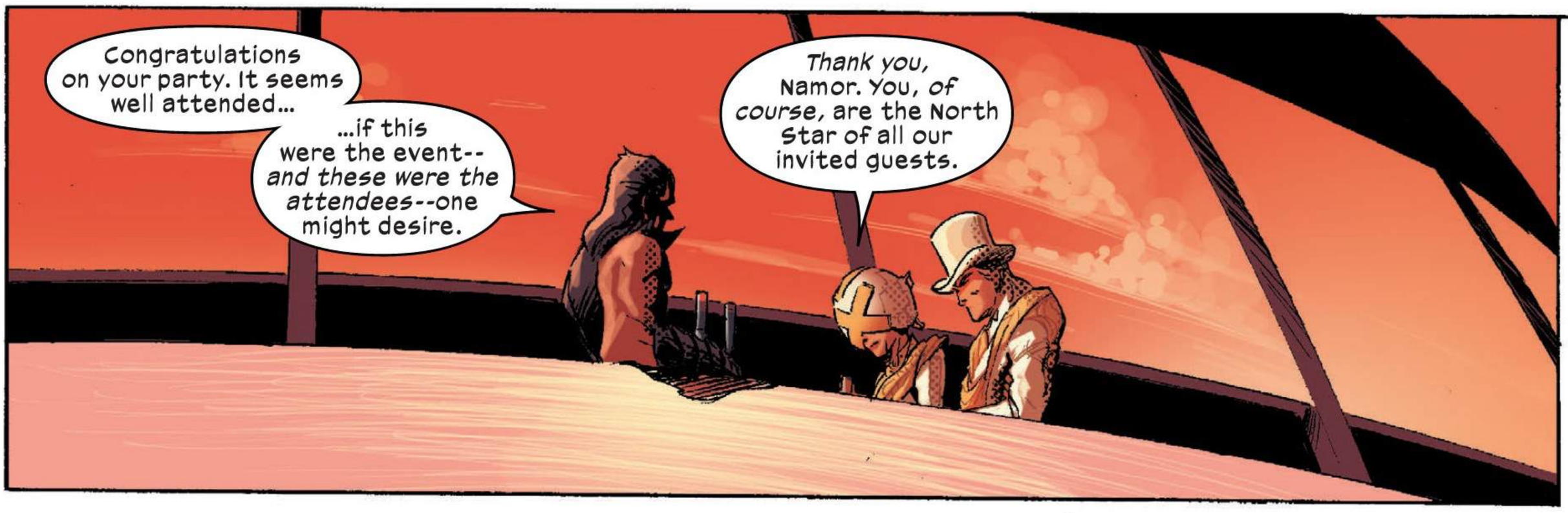
*Understood.* Can I bring you anything else, sir? Something to nibble on?

Cheese, perhaps?

We can handle it from here, Jamie.

Ah...

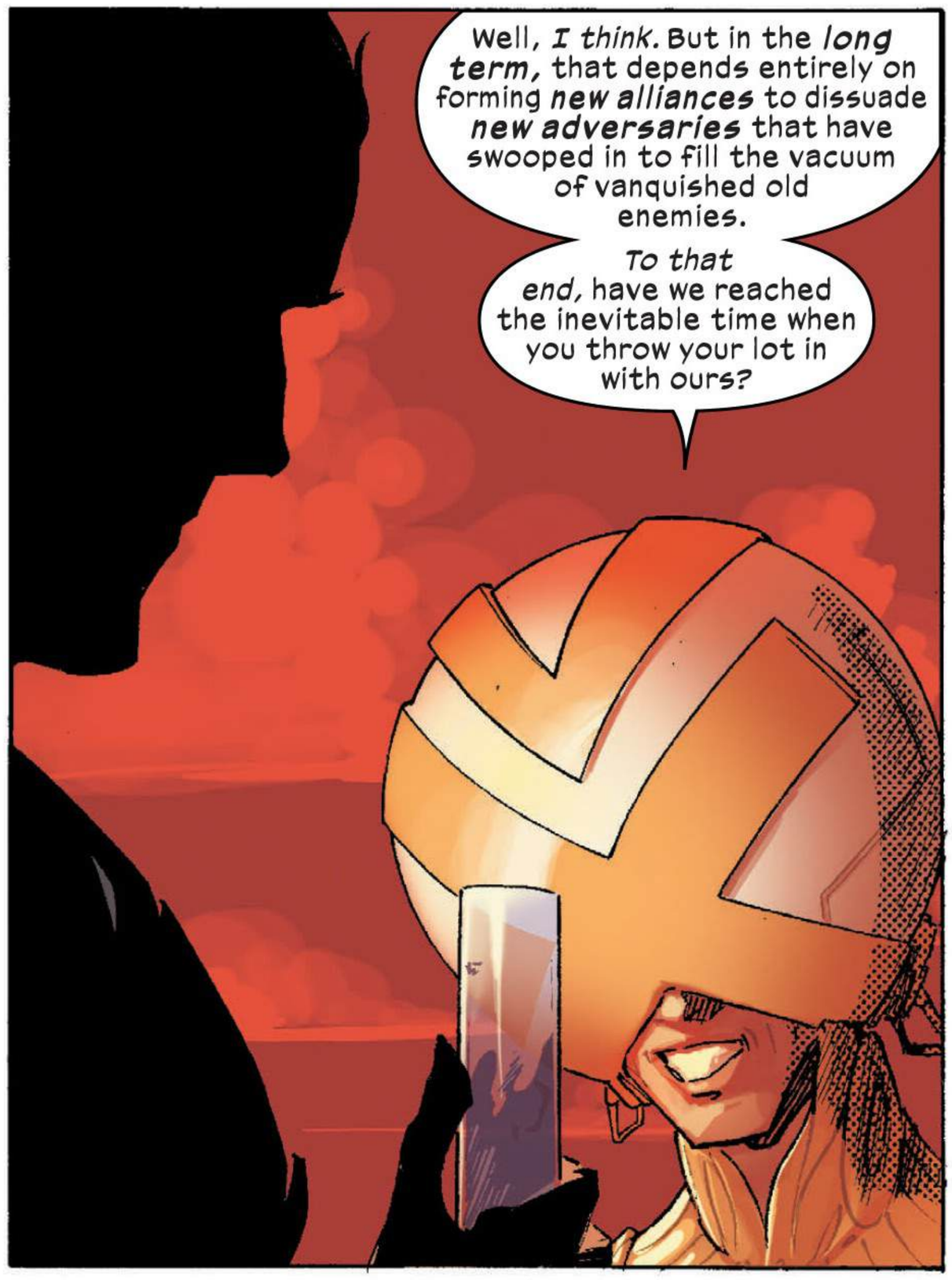

Charles.
Erik.


Congratulations on your party. It seems well attended...
...if this were the event--*and these were the attendees*--one might desire.
*Thank you,* Namor. You, *of course,* are the North Star of all our invited guests.

***Yes.*** You grace us with your presence, your majesty.
We are ***honored*** and ***humbled.***

So.
Yes?

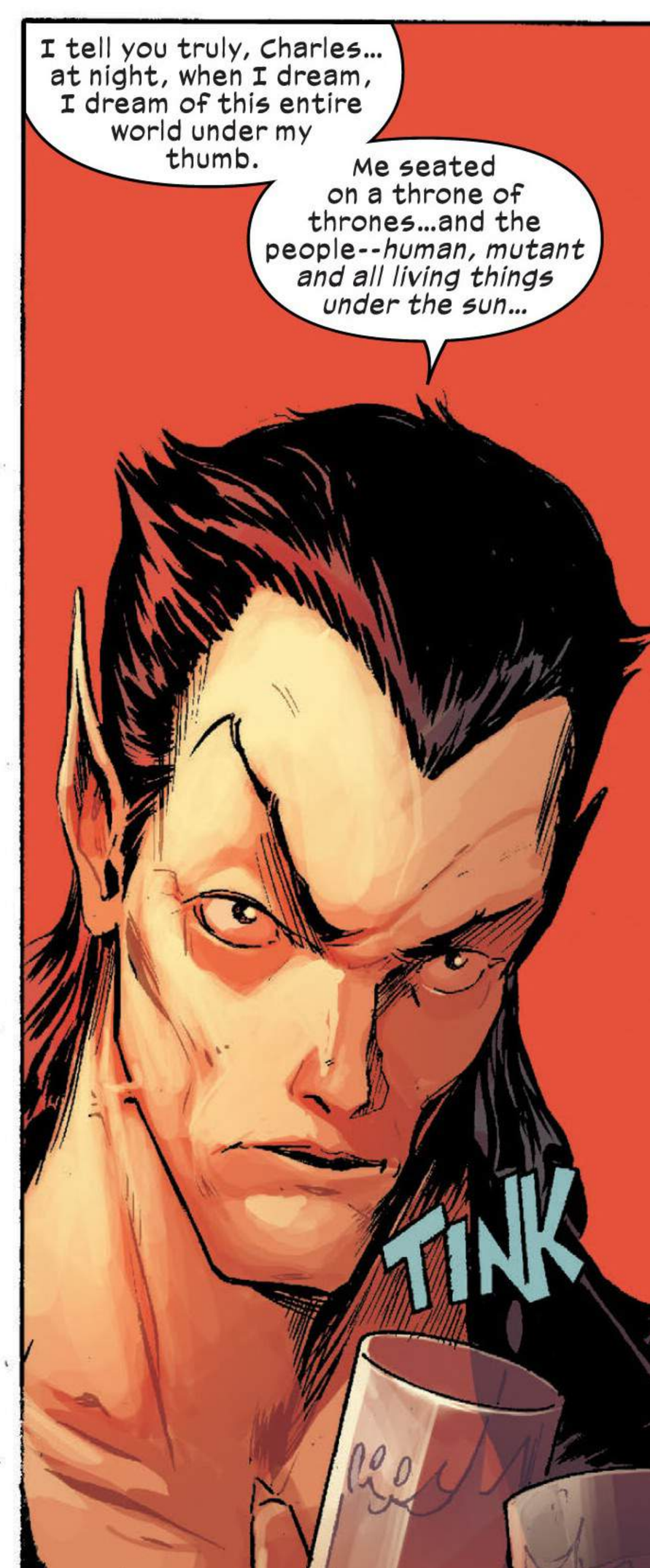
How goes the ***empire building?***

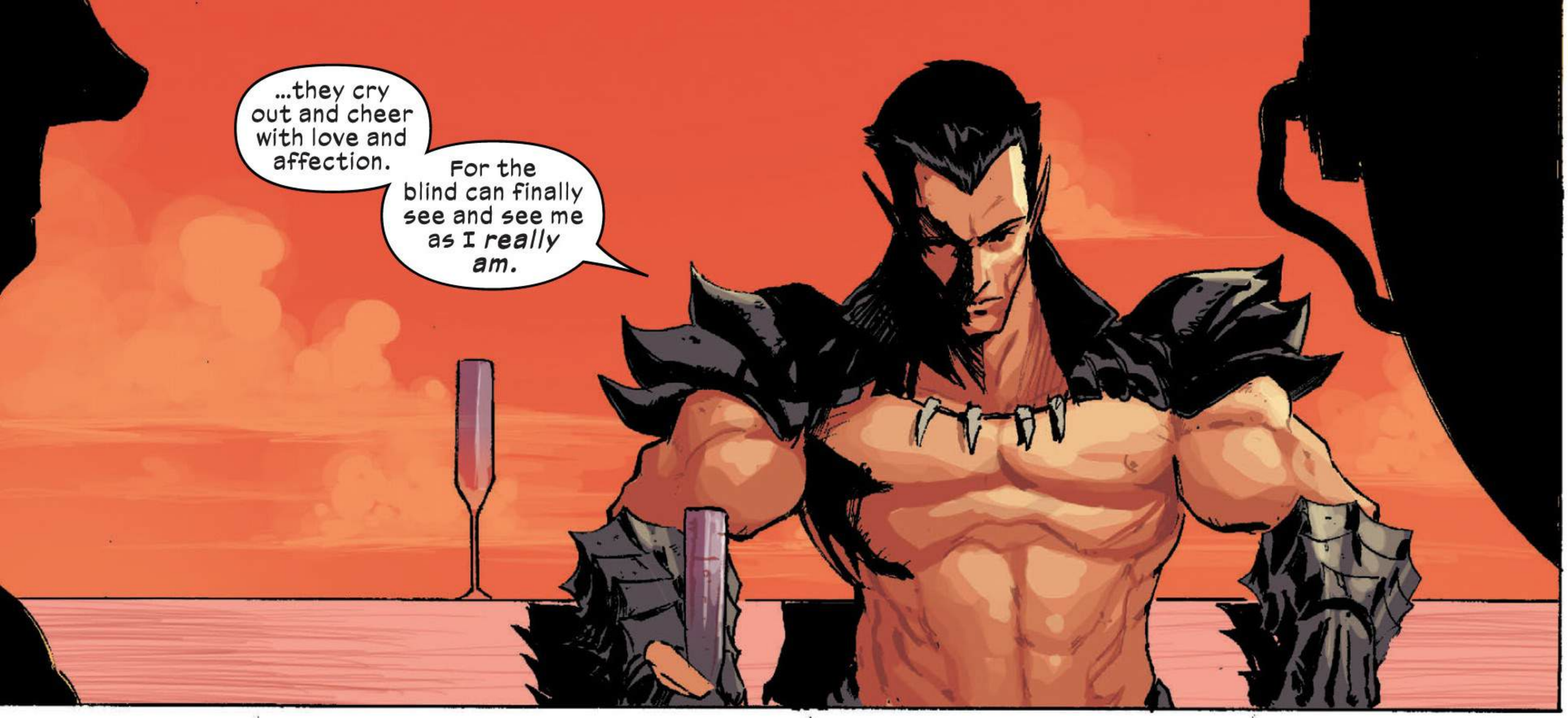

Well, *I think.* But in the ***long term,*** that depends entirely on forming ***new alliances*** to dissuade ***new adversaries*** that have swooped in to fill the vacuum of vanquished old enemies.
*To that end,* have we reached the inevitable time when you throw your lot in with ours?

If it's a question of ***influence...***changes are coming to the ***Quiet Council.***
We can offer you a ***seat.***

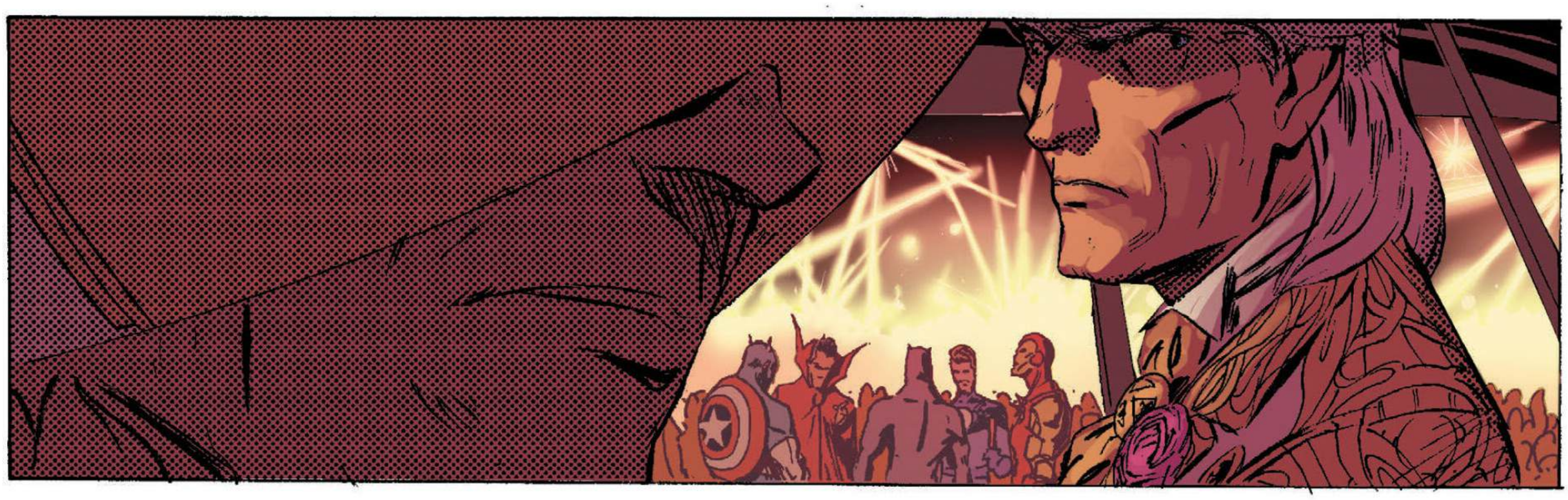
*Offer?* I think if I stepped one foot into your council chamber, there would be a rush to surrender a seat to me...even if one were not available.
Frauds tend to flee at the sight of a true aristocrat.
I am a ***real king,*** Erik. *Never forget this.*

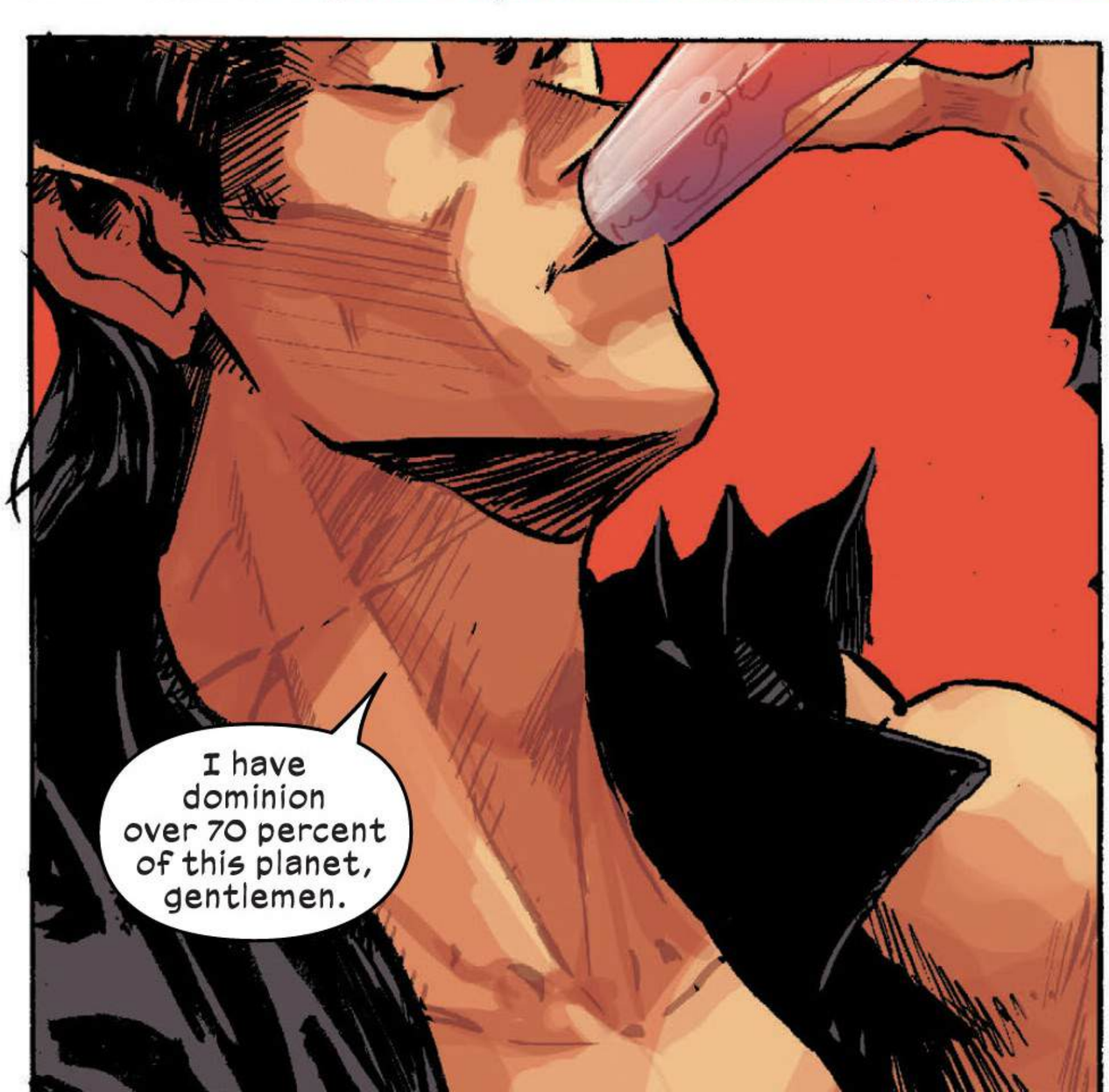
Then you should return home. Claim your rightful place among *your people.*


I tell you truly, Charles... at night, when I dream, I dream of this entire world under my thumb.
Me seated on a throne of thrones...and the people--*human, mutant and all living things under the sun...*
TINK


...they cry out and cheer with love and affection.
For the blind can finally see and see me as I *really* am.

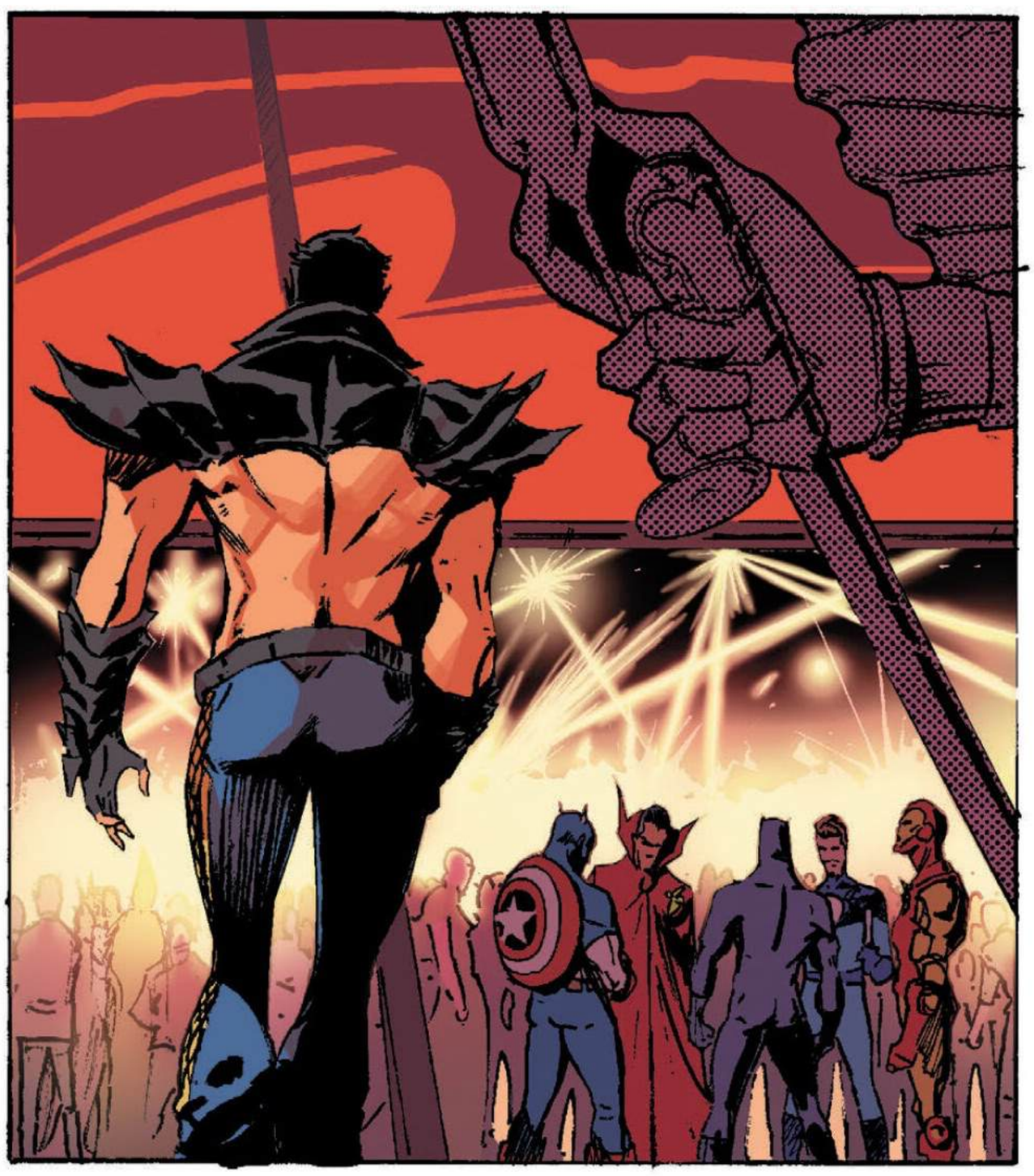
Which I assure you...
...is not my being on a council with those who *pretend* to be my *peers*.




I have dominion over 70 percent of this planet, gentlemen.

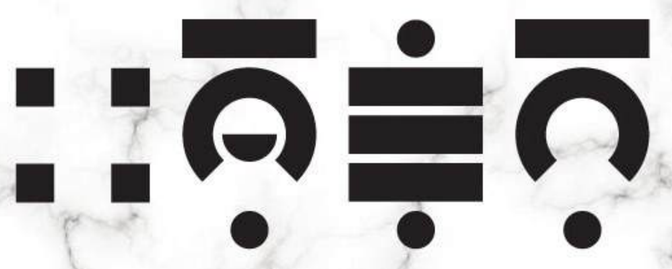
You currently control, what... *an island?*

Get back to me when you have something more to offer.



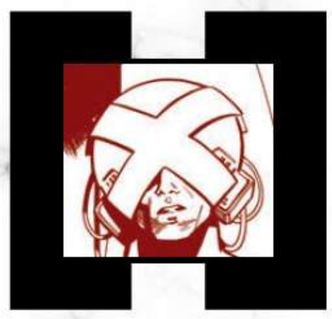
"Until that day, my interests--*whatever they may be...*

"...will remain *divided.*"



# END OF AN ERA

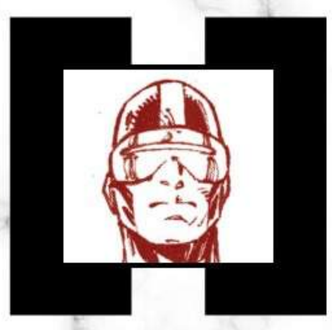
At the first Krakoan Hellfire Gala, the mutant world is in flux. While an election is about to be held to select the X-MEN, the heroes of Krakoa, the new team is far from the only change coming...



Professor X

Magneto

Namor



Cyclops

Jean Grey

Emma Frost

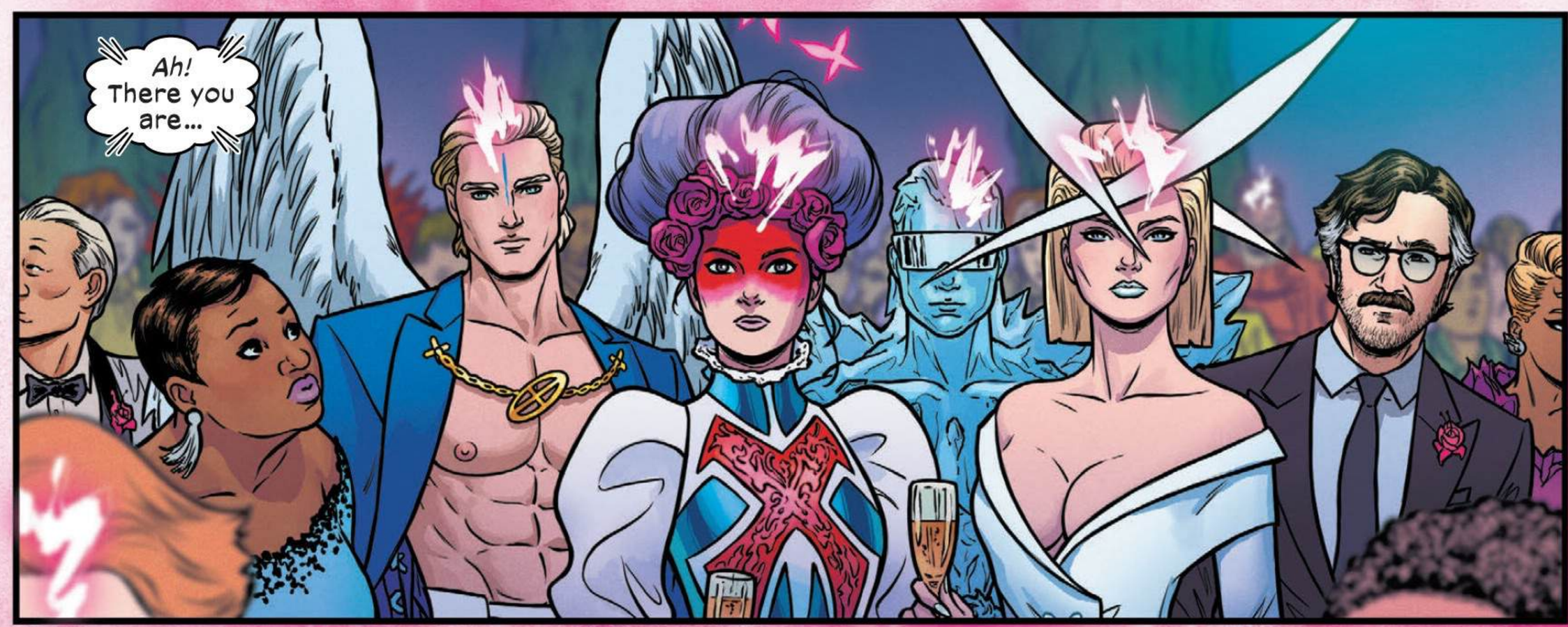
10:15 P.M.
Election.
If I could have your attention, please.

Thank you.
We've reached that point in the evening when it's time to introduce you to our new team of X-Men.

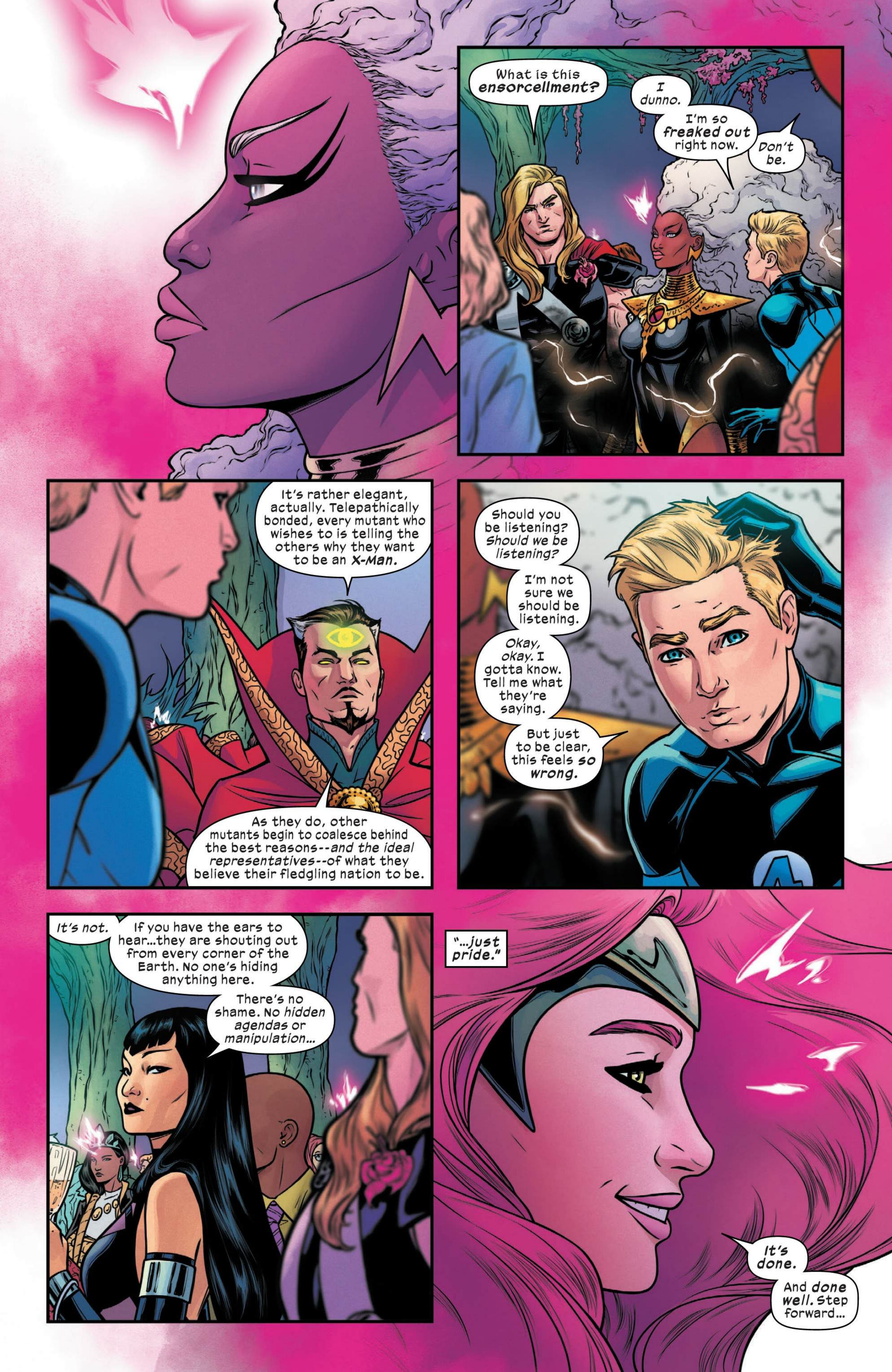
Of course, before we can do that...
...they have to be selected.

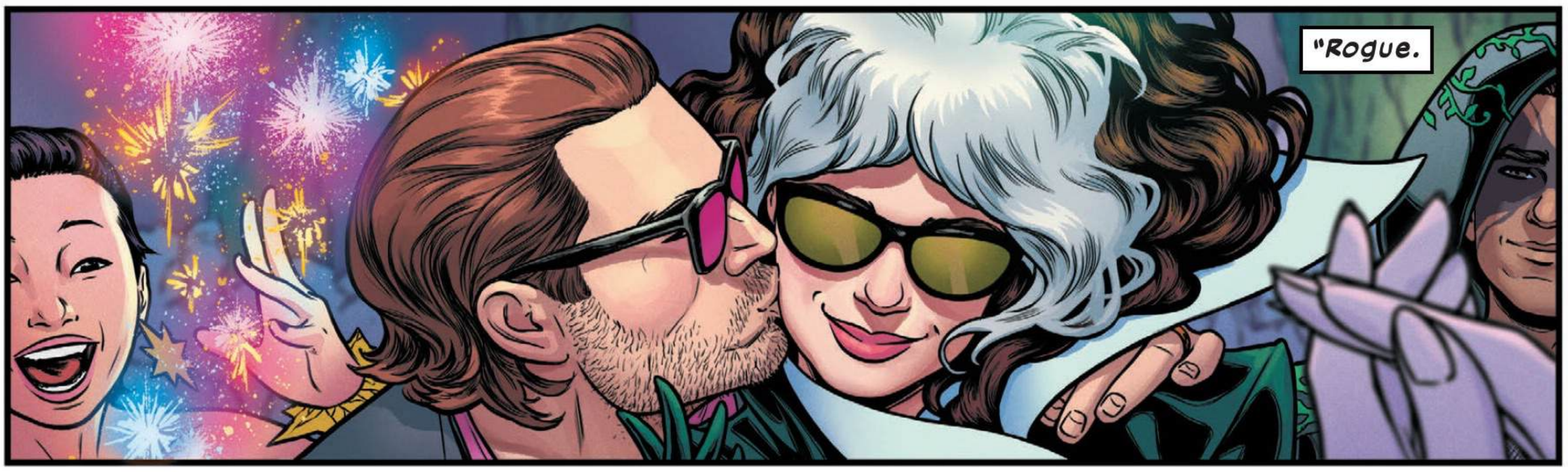
Jean?
Mutants of Earth...

...open your minds to me.


Ah! There you are...

Shall we begin?

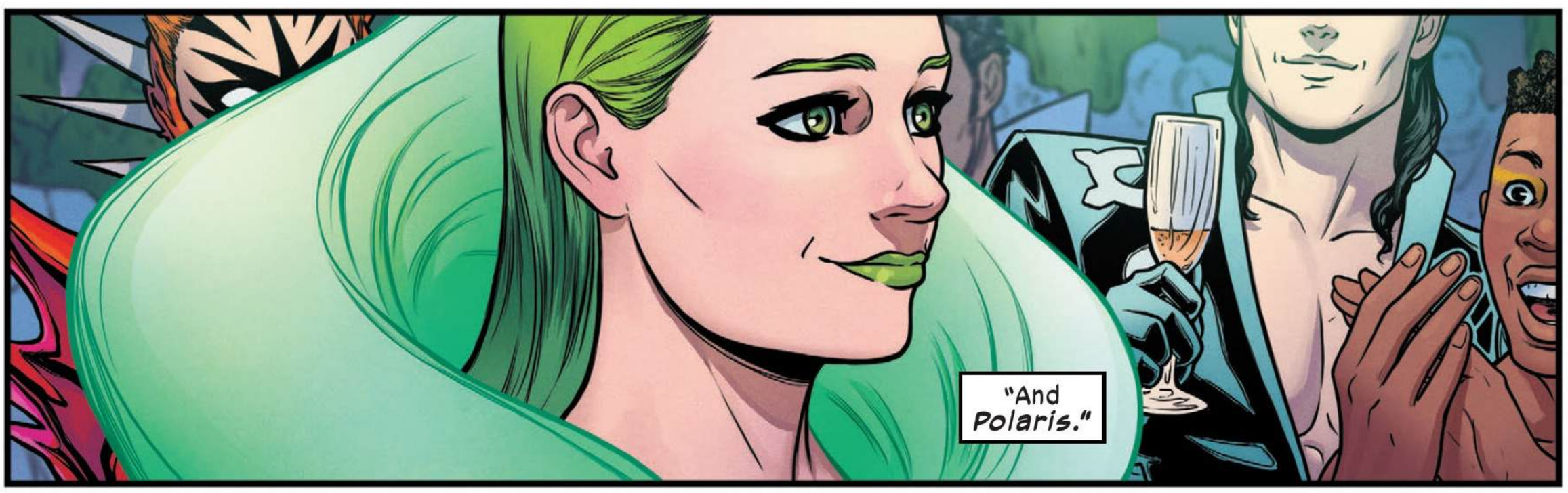

What is this ensorcellment?
I dunno.
I'm so freaked out right now.
Don't be.
It's rather elegant, actually. Telepathically bonded, every mutant who wishes to is telling the others why they want to be an X-Man.
As they do, other mutants begin to coalesce behind the best reasons--and the ideal representatives--of what they believe their fledgling nation to be.
Should you be listening? Should we be listening?
I'm not sure we should be listening.
Okay, okay. I gotta know. Tell me what they're saying.
But just to be clear, this feels so wrong.
It's not.
If you have the ears to hear...they are shouting out from every corner of the Earth. No one's hiding anything here.
There's no shame. No hidden agendas or manipulation...
"...just pride."
It's done.
And done well. Step forward...


"Rogue.

"Sunfire.

"Wolverine.

"Synch.


"And Polaris."

Ladies and gentlemen...
...humans and mutants...
...I give you...
...your X-Men.

[00.00_lies]

# THE RED DIAMOND

*[All the best news and gossip from Bar Sinister]*

**SINISTER SECRET #51**
This Quiet Council member isn't actually fooling anyone, they're fooling everyone. Wear a mask long enough and eventually it starts wearing you. Such a shame, not being able to let things go.

**SINISTER SECRET #52**
She doesn't have it yet, but one way or another, this mutant always, always, always gets what she wants. Will it be given to her, or will it have to be taken? Doesn't matter -- the real question is: What's in the box? Could it be diamonds or something far more valuable?

**SINISTER SECRET #53**
I bet you'd like to know how this fittest-of-all mutant is handling the second genesis of his external life. Sorry, you'll have to wait to find out.

**SINISTER SECRET #54**
Seducer made an honest man of the island's favorite boy, but what unspoken secrets are coursing through the nervous system of the favorite boy's island friend? Are you listening? I know that you are.

**SINISTER SECRET #55**
Regarding secrets and secret alliances -- and the shadow play that is the great game of nations -- just how many ruling councils are there now circling the sun? I'll never tell, but if you say two, you're definitely too low.

[00.00_lies]

**SINISTER SECRET #56**
And speaking of things that come in twos, two empty seats on the Quiet Council are two too many. Look for there to be moves made in the filling of those empty seats, regardless of how many favors have to be called in or how many unwise alliances are formed. Just remember: When everyone has a secret, no one can be trusted.

**SINISTER SECRET #57**
For far too long, they shared an existence. Now the one has become two. The first is a shattered captain of a demanding queen, and the second, a sinister sword under a sinister thumb. How long will the second stay there? How many more sinister demands will be too many? No one knows, but I think we're getting close.

**SINISTER SECRET #58**
It's still the early days of the Vescoran excavation of blight worlds, but an unknown material of immeasurable worth has begun appearing in the Crooked Market. So far, the Mad Jasper has snatched up every piece as soon as it's available for trade, but don't you worry -- our confederacy of capes is set on acquiring some. By hook or crook.

**SINISTER SECRET #59**
Promotions are hard to come by when everyone is a resurrected immortal, but sometimes a change has to be made when an unexpected variable is added to the equation. Heroes and their do-gooder ways -- always an inconvenience for a practical mutant.

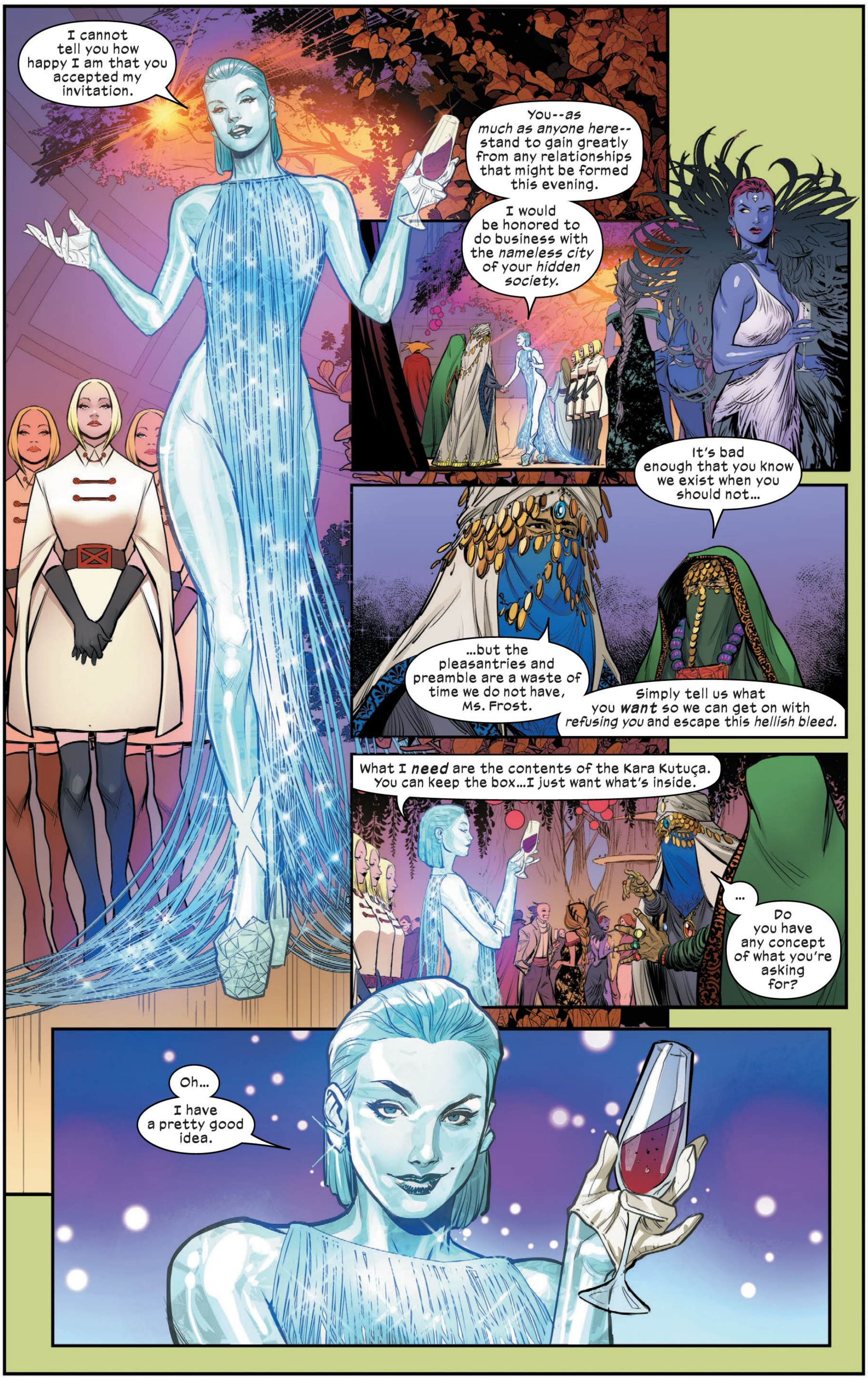
**SINISTER SECRETS REVEALED! [Reposted]**
*We don't hear this word spoken often, so when we do, it's best to pay attention, because when you square that circle, what took a long time to build can come crumbling down rather quickly.*

**[Inferno]**

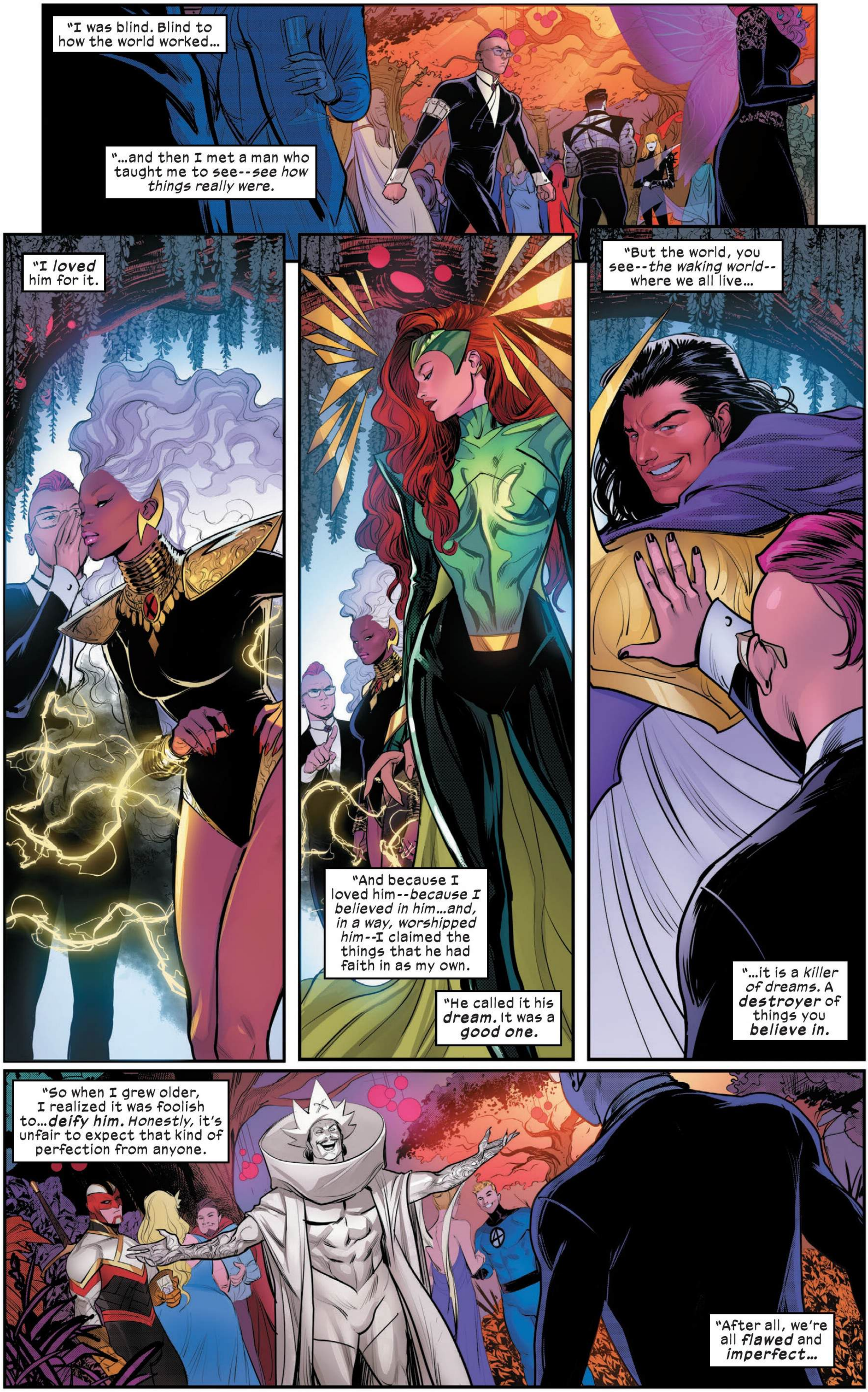
**SINISTER SECRET #60**
What sinister someone has been hard at work studying the vile helix of a vile world? *Pssst!* It's me! *Shhhhhhhh!*

[00.00_lies]

11:35 P.M.
Exodus.
"Ah! How wonderful. What a delightful surprise."


I cannot tell you how happy I am that you accepted my invitation.
You--as *much as anyone here*--stand to gain greatly from any relationships that might be formed this evening.
I would be honored to do business with the *nameless city* of your *hidden society*.
It's bad enough that you know we exist when you should not...
...but the pleasantries and preamble are a waste of time we do not have, Ms. Frost.
Simply tell us what you ***want*** so we can get on with *refusing you* and escape this *hellish bleed*.
What I ***need*** are the contents of the Kara Kutuça. You can keep the box...I just want what's inside.
...
Do you have any concept of what you're asking for?
Oh...
I have a pretty good idea.

Excuse me. I'd like a...
Bartender, can I get a...
Guess not.
Problem, friend?
Can't get this guy to notice me.
Jamie.
One for the room, please.
Nice.
Yeah. Thanks.
Don't mention it.
So...
...what's your story?
Well...
It's complicated.

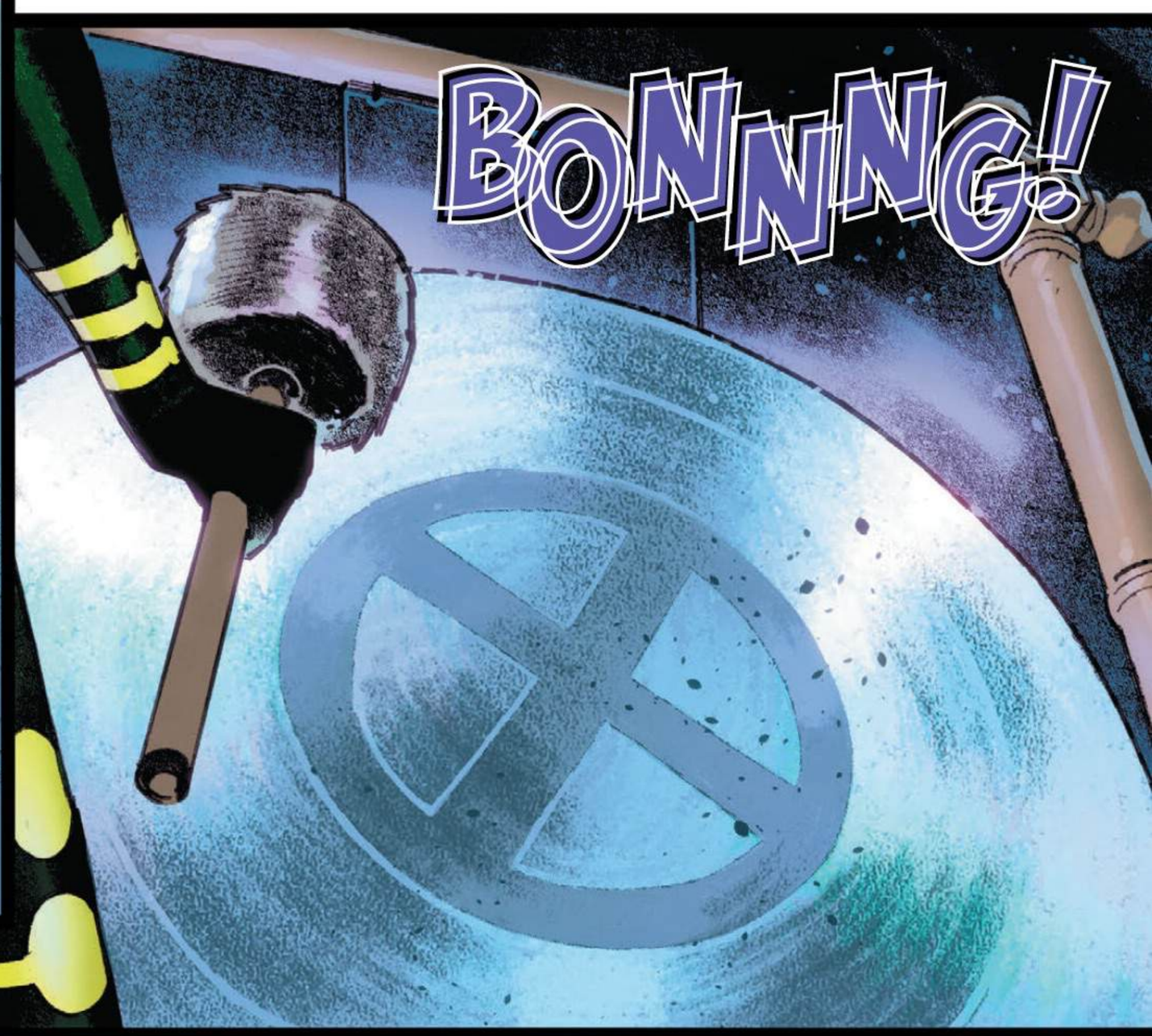

"I was blind. Blind to how the world worked...
"...and then I met a man who taught me to see--*see how things really were.*
"I *loved* him for it.
"And because I loved him--*because I believed in him...and, in a way, worshipped him*--I claimed the things that he had faith in as my own.
"He called it his ***dream.*** It was a ***good one.***
"But the world, you see--*the waking world*--where we all live...
"...it is a *killer of dreams.* A ***destroyer*** of things you ***believe in.***
"So when I grew older, I realized it was foolish to...***deify him.*** *Honestly,* it's unfair to expect that kind of perfection from anyone.
"After all, we're all ***flawed*** and ***imperfect...***

"*So what's my story?*

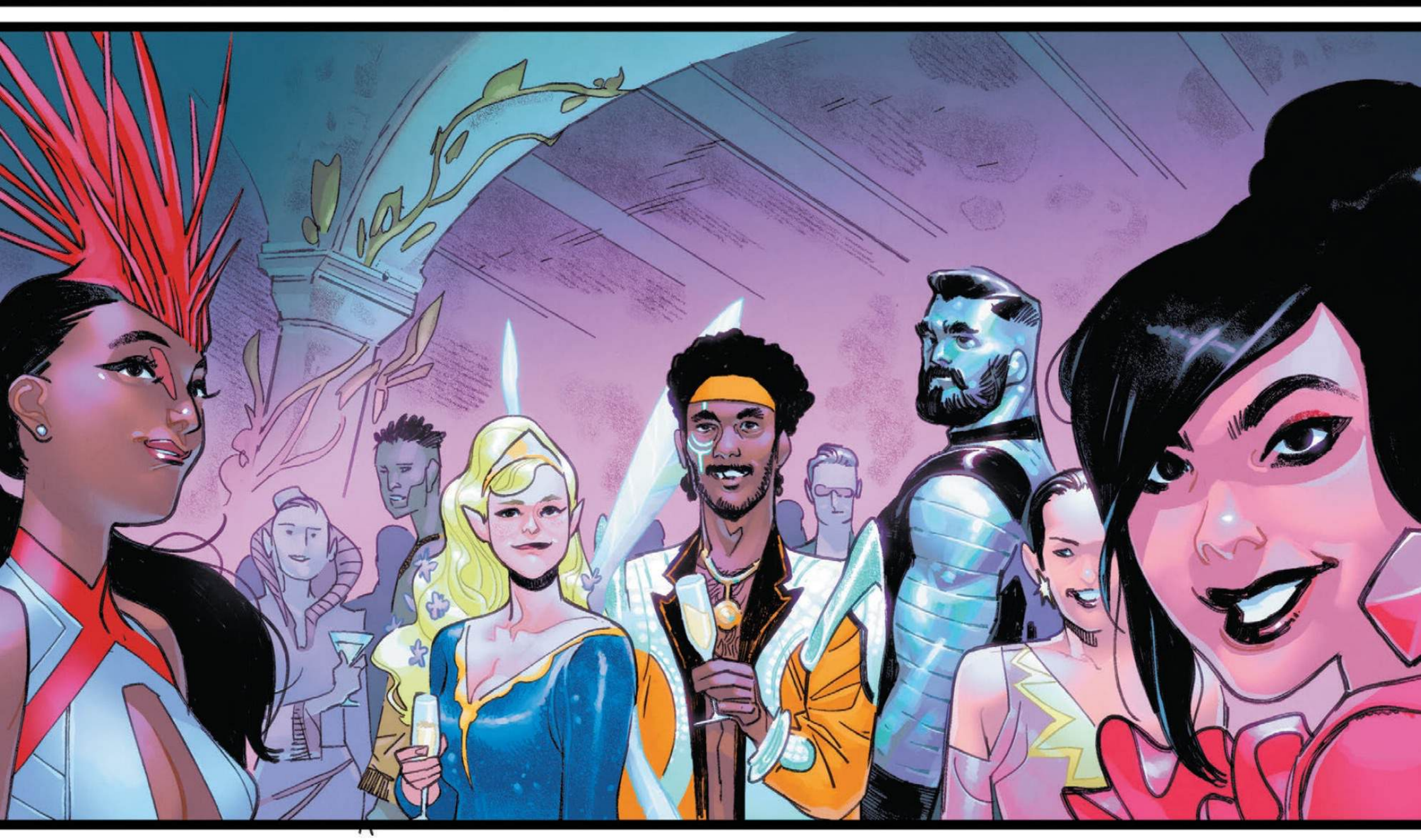
"I'm a *dreamer.*

"I'm an *X-Man.*"

11:45 P.M.
Fireworks.


BONNG!

BONNG!
BONNGGG!



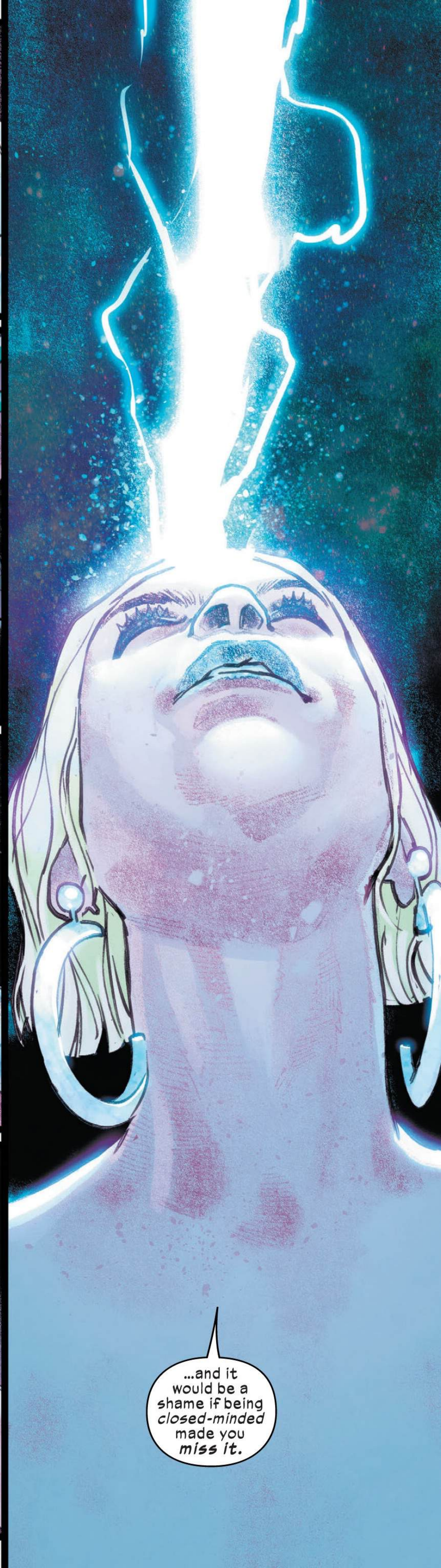
It's an *interesting* thing.
***An ending.***
Yes, it is often simply a matter of perspective. What seems to be an ending for you might be the beginning for someone else...
...or, more appropriately, what seems to be the ending of an occasion--*let's call it a party, a gala, even*--might be the start of a new proceeding altogether.
A *second event* unto itself.
***Expansion,*** if I must put a word to it.

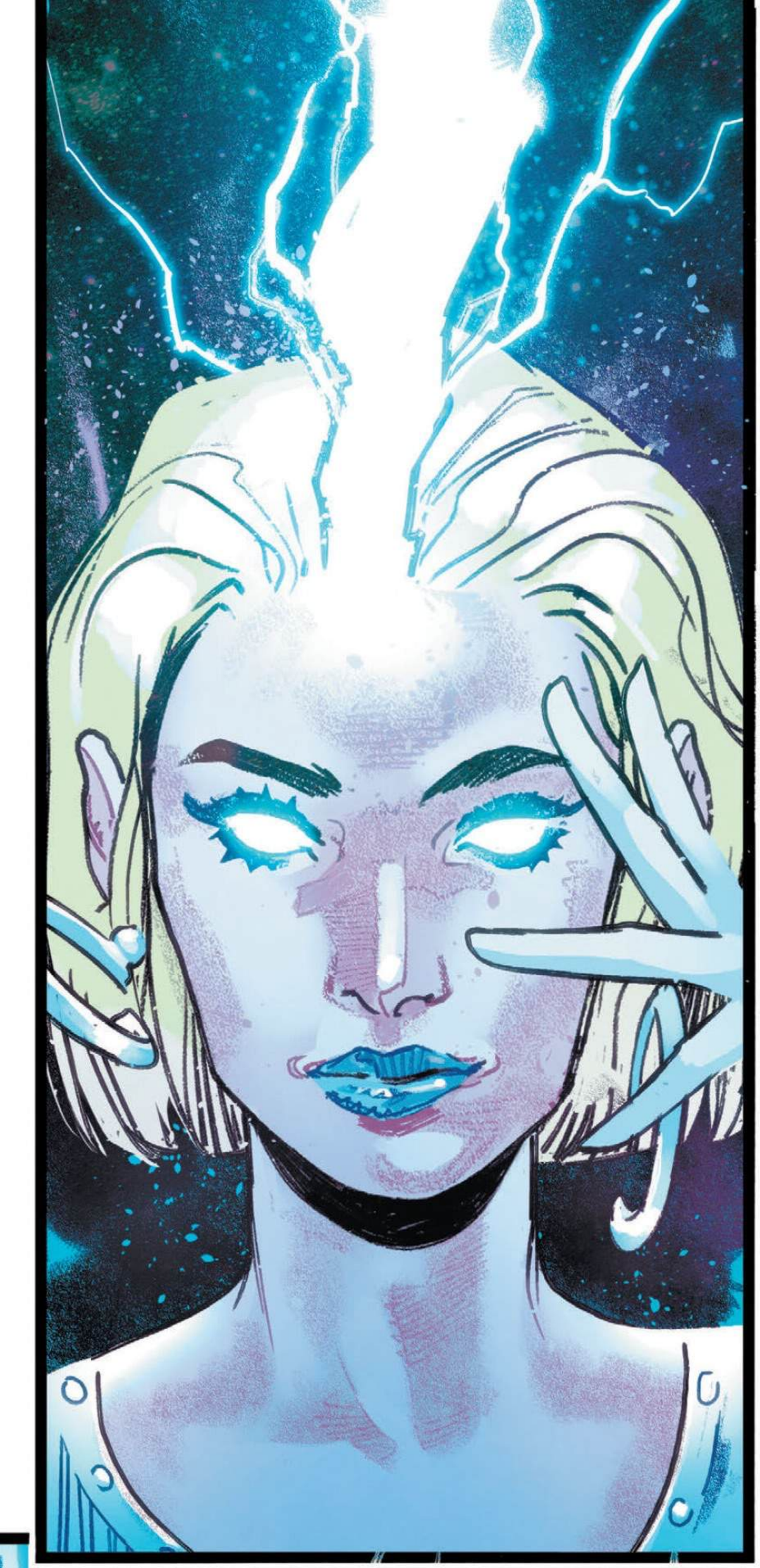
I'm going to connect all our minds now.

All of us--human and mutant...
...as I want to offer you a...unique view of the show.

You can refuse, of course...but fair warning...

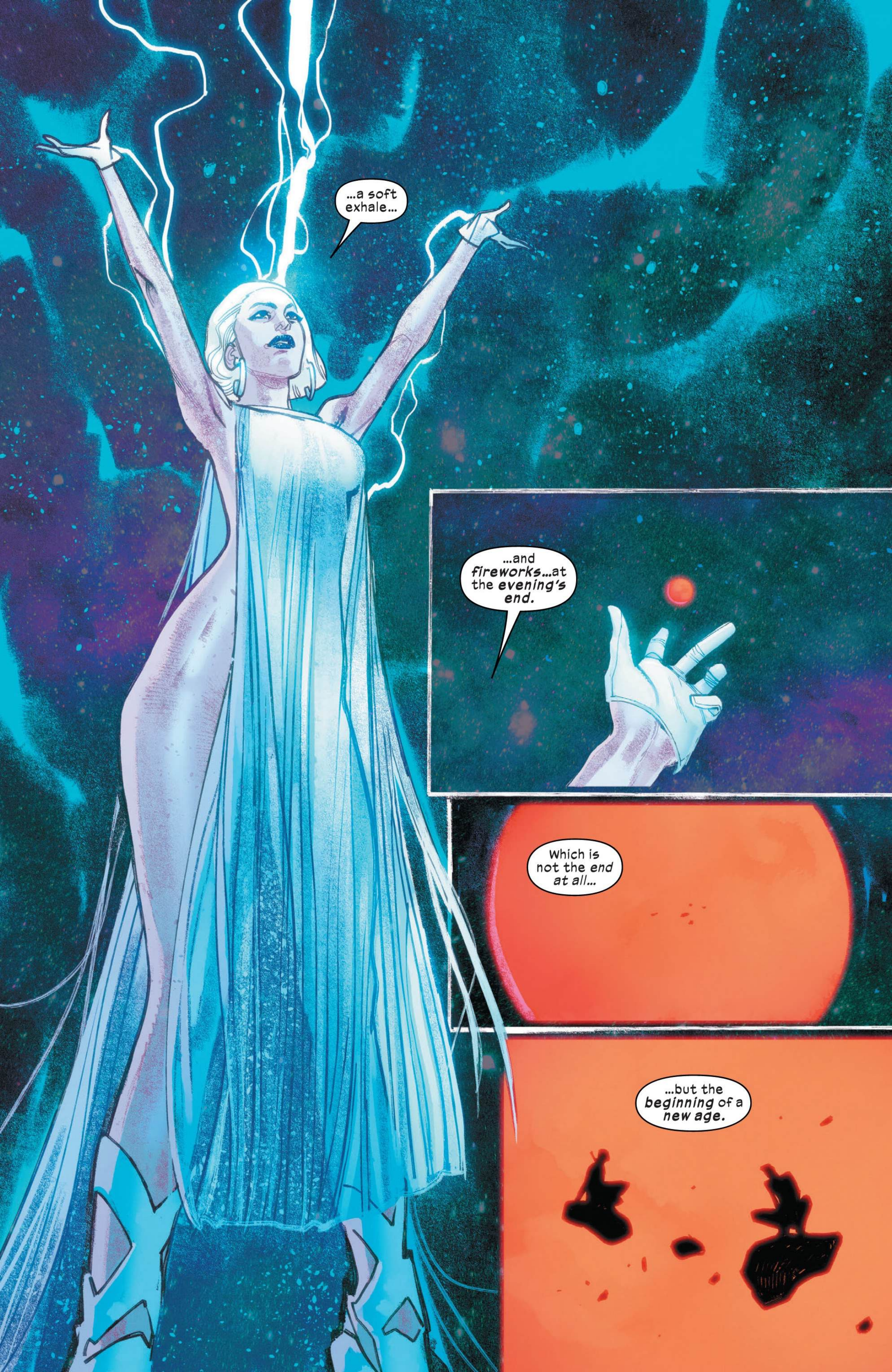
...this is one of those "where were you at when" moments...


...and it would be a shame if being closed-minded made you miss it.



So...

...a deep breath...


...a soft exhale...
...and fireworks...at the evening's end.
Which is not the end at all...
...but the beginning of a new age.

**X-Men #1**

by Leinil Francis Yu
& Sunny Gho

**X-Men #2**

by Leinil Francis Yu
& Sunny Gho

**X-Men #3**

by Leinil Francis Yu
& Sunny Gho

**X-Men #4**

by Leinil Francis Yu
& Sunny Gho

**X-Men #5**

by Leinil Francis Yu
& Sunny Gho

**X-Men #6**

by Leinil Francis Yu
& Sunny Gho

**X-Men #7**

by Leinil Francis Yu
& Sunny Gho

**Giant-Size X-Men: Jean Grey and Emma Frost** by Russell Dauterman

**X-Men #8**

by Leinil Francis Yu
& Sunny Gho

**X-Men #9**

by Leinil Francis Yu
& Sunny Gho

**Giant-Size X-Men: Nightcrawler**

by Alan Davis
& Edgar Delgado

**Giant-Size X-Men: Magneto** by Ben Oliver

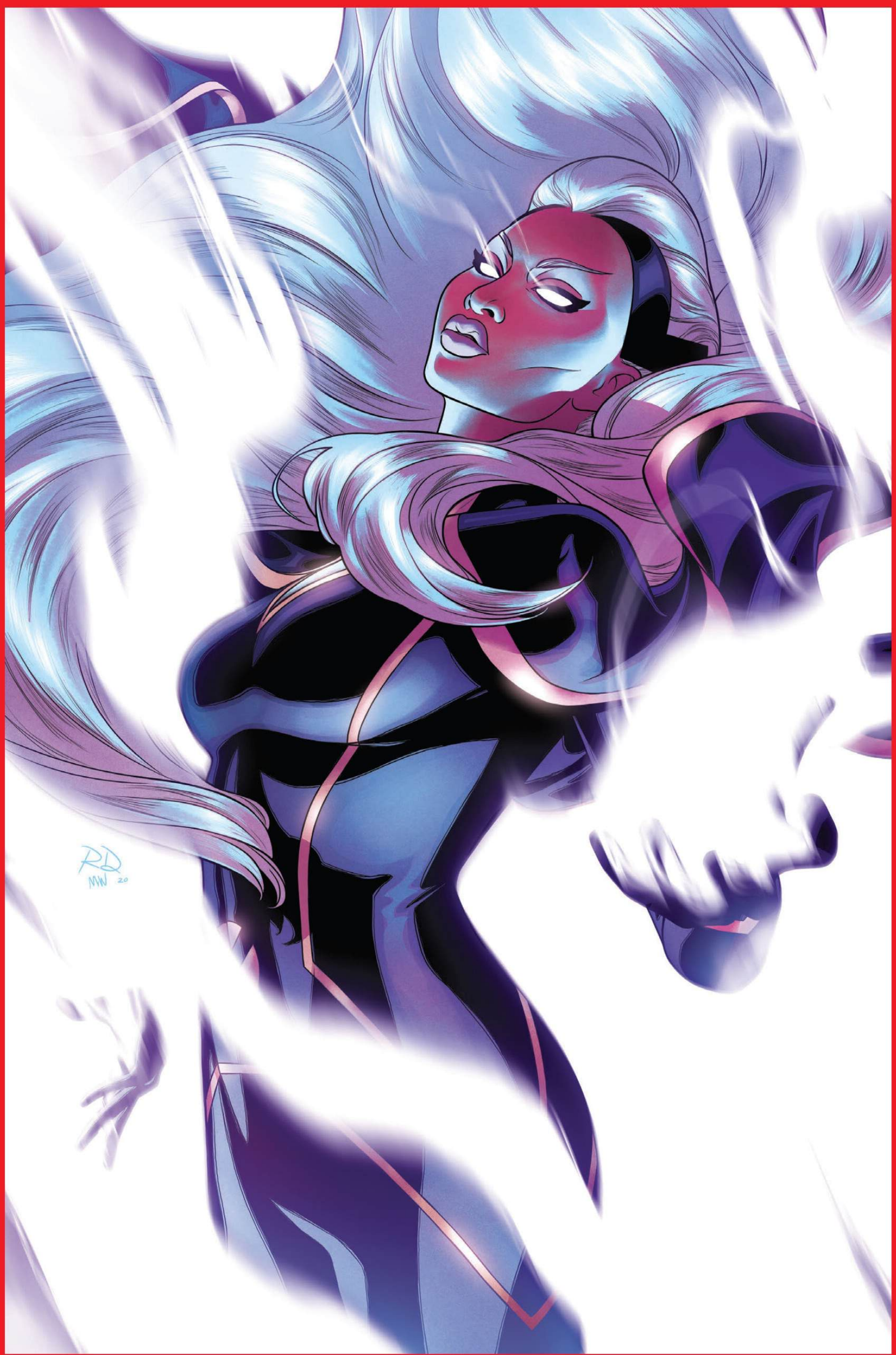
**X-Men #10**

by Leinil Francis Yu
& Sunny Gho

**X-Men #11**

by Leinil Francis Yu
& Sunny Gho

**Giant-Size X-Men: Fantomex** by Rod Reis




**Giant-Size X-Men: Storm**

by Russell Dauterman
& Matthew Wilson

**X-Men #12**

by Leinil Francis Yu
& Sunny Gho

**X-Men #16**

by Leinil Francis Yu
& Sunny Gho

**X-Men #17**

by Leinil Francis Yu
& Sunny Gho

**X-Men #18**

by Leinil Francis Yu
& Sunny Gho

**X-Men #19**

by Leinil Francis Yu
& Sunny Gho

**X-Men #20**

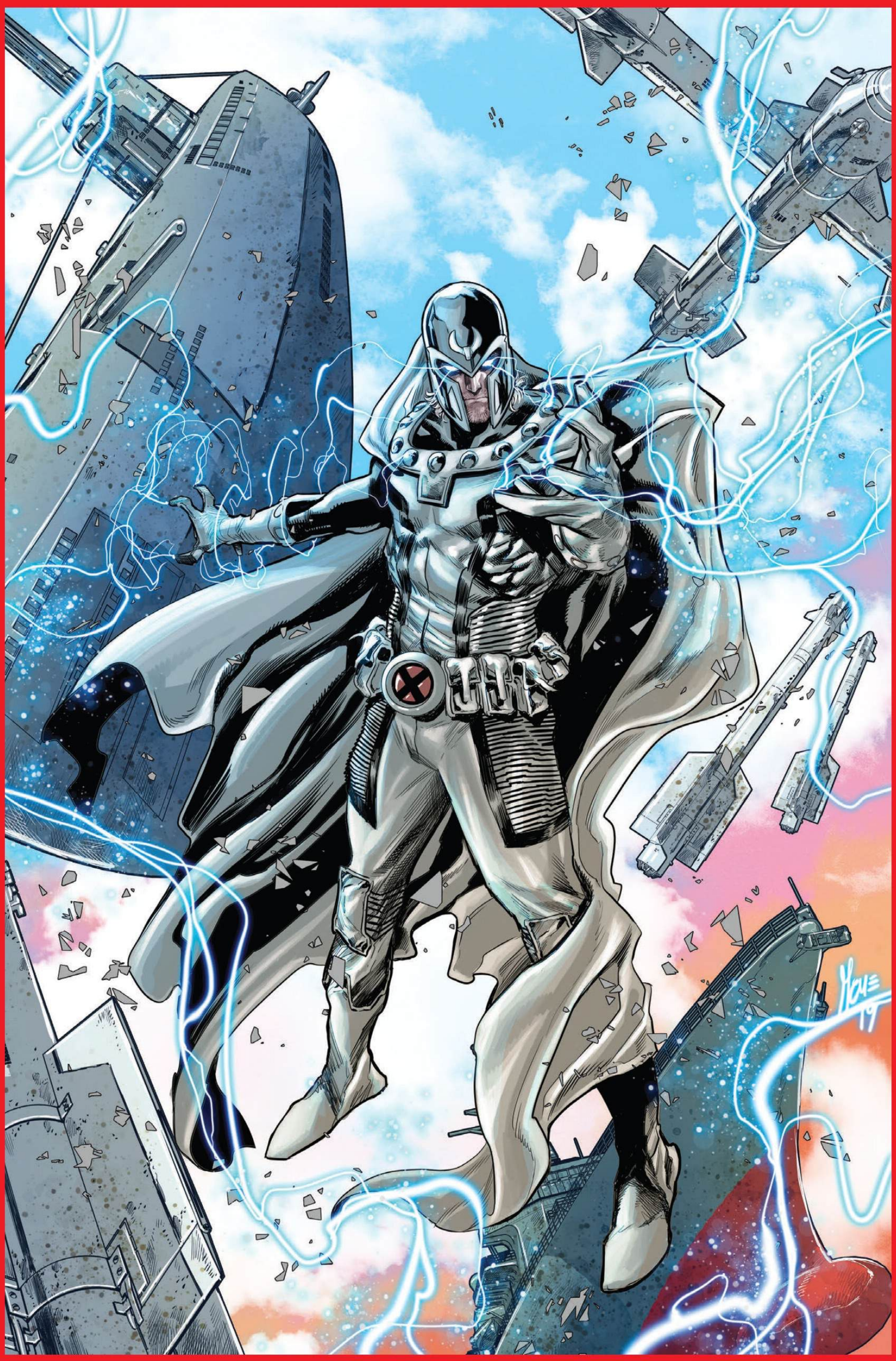
by Leinil Francis Yu
& Sunny Gho

**X-Men #21**

by Leinil Francis Yu
& Sunny Gho

**X-Men #1 Variant** by Russell Dauterman

**X-Men #1 Variant** by Stanley “Artgerm” Lao



**X-Men #1 Young Guns Variant** by Marco Checchetto

**X-Men #1 Hidden Gem Variant**

by Chris Bachalo, Tim Townsend & Edgar Delgado

**X-Men #1 Variant**

by Whilce Portacio
& Chris Sotomayor

**X-Men #1 Party Variant** by Mark Brooks

**X-Men #1 Design Variant** by Tom Muller

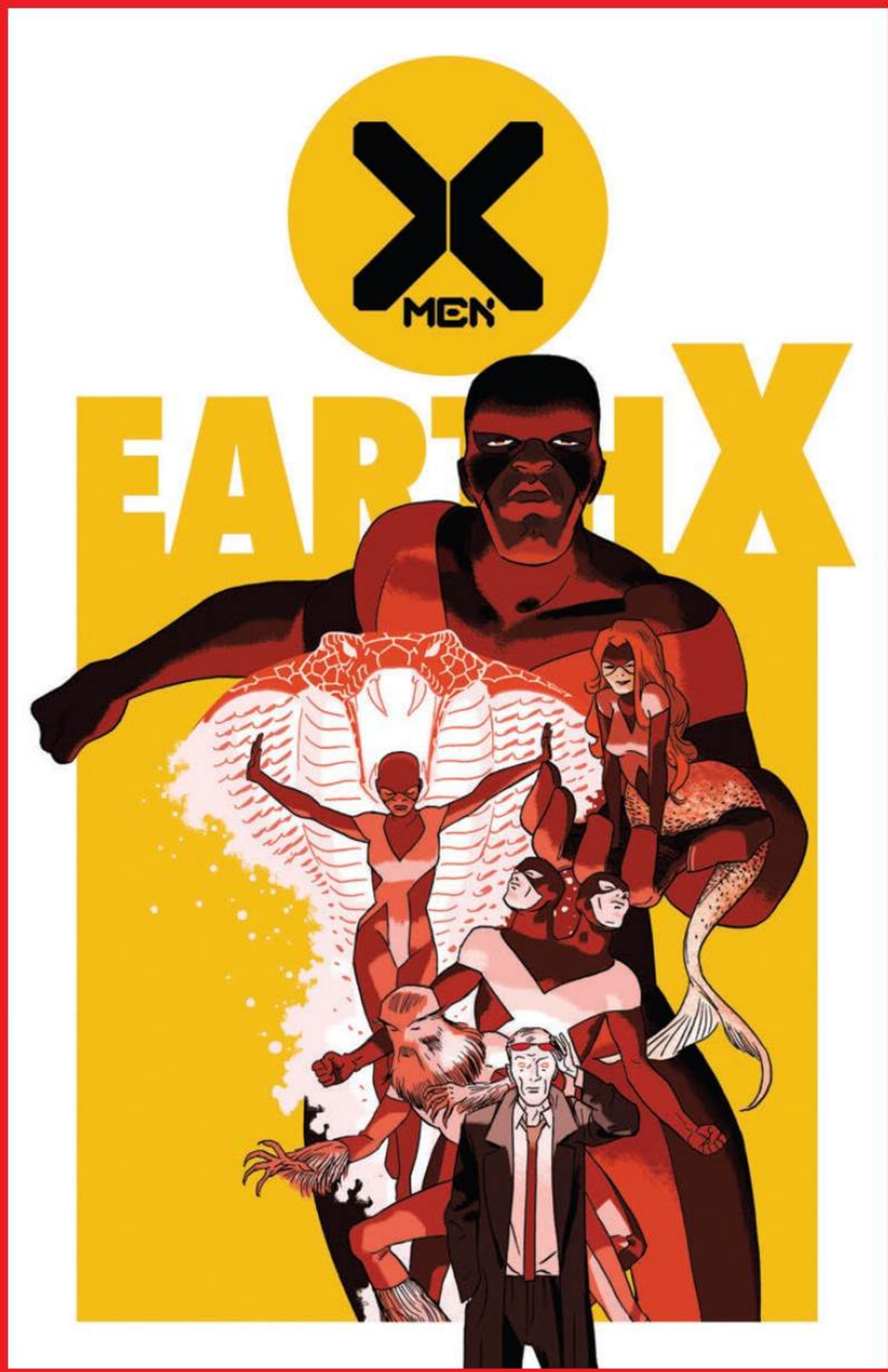
**X-Men #2 Variant** by Marcos Martin

**X-Men #2 2099 Variant** by Ron Lim & Israel Silva

**X-Men #3 Marvels 25th Anniversary Variant** by Alex Ross

**X-Men #3 Venom Island Variant**
by Mike McKone & Rachelle Rosenberg

**X-Men #4 Venom Island Variant**
by Belén Ortega & Jesus Aburtov




**X-Men #5 Marvels X Variant**
by Marcos Martin

**X-Men #6 Marvels X Variant**
by Philip Tan & Dave McCaig

**X-Men #5 Dark Phoenix Saga 40th Anniversary Variant**

by Kris Anka

**X-Men #6 Dark Phoenix Saga 40th Anniversary Variant**

by Mark Brooks

**X-Men #7 Variant** by Mike del Mundo

**X-Men #10 Variant** by Phil Noto

**X-Men #8 God Loves, Man Kills Variant**
by Marcos Martin

**X-Men #10 Zombies Variant**
by Ryan Brown

**X-Men #11 Empyre Variant**
by Adam Kubert

**X-Men #11 Days of Future Past Variant**
by Javier Rodríguez

**X-Men #16 Knullified Variant** by Iban Coello & Jesus Aburtov

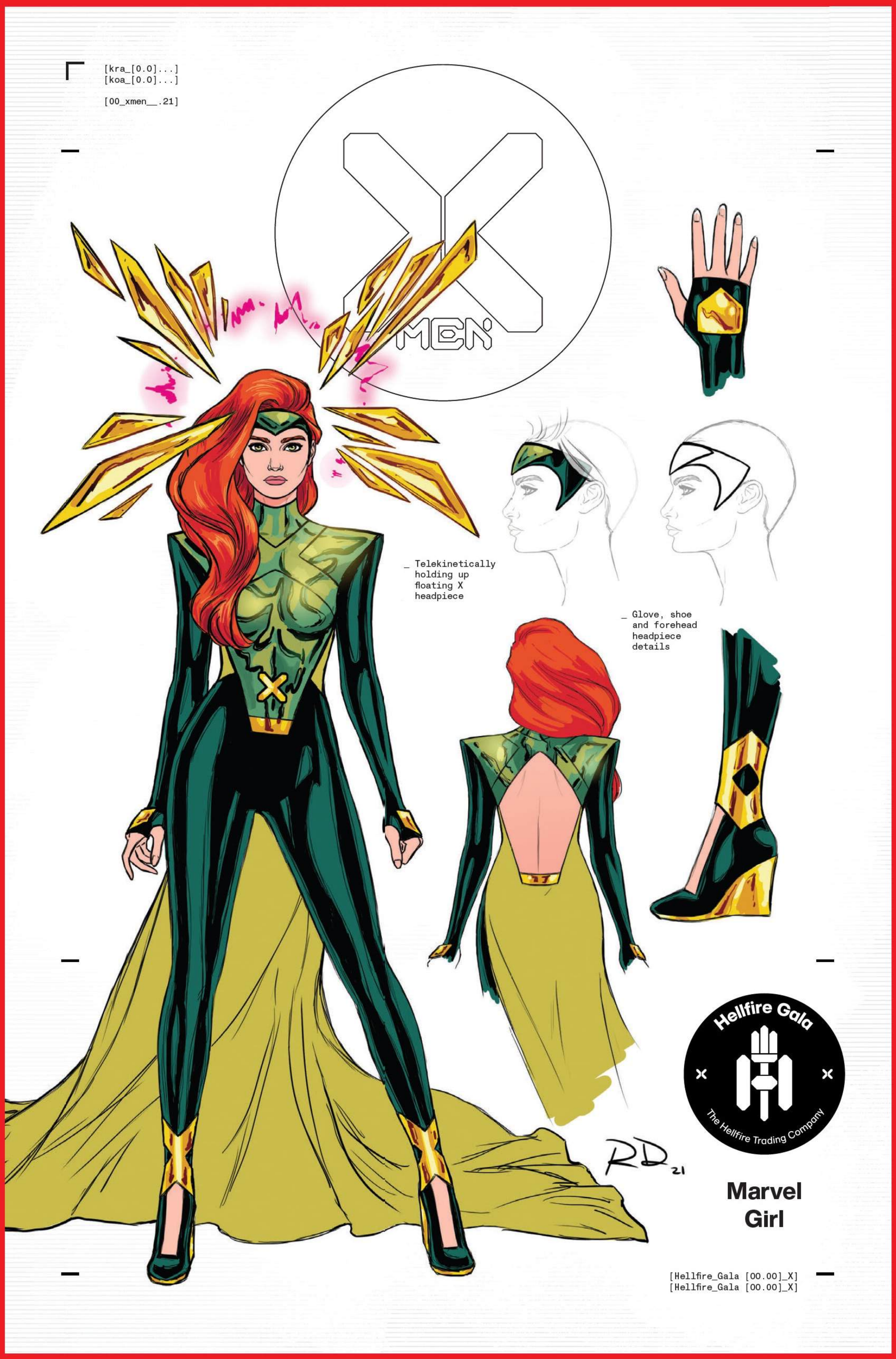
**X-Men #18 Variant** by David Finch & Frank D'Armata

**X-Men #18 Black History Month Variant** by Ernanda Souza

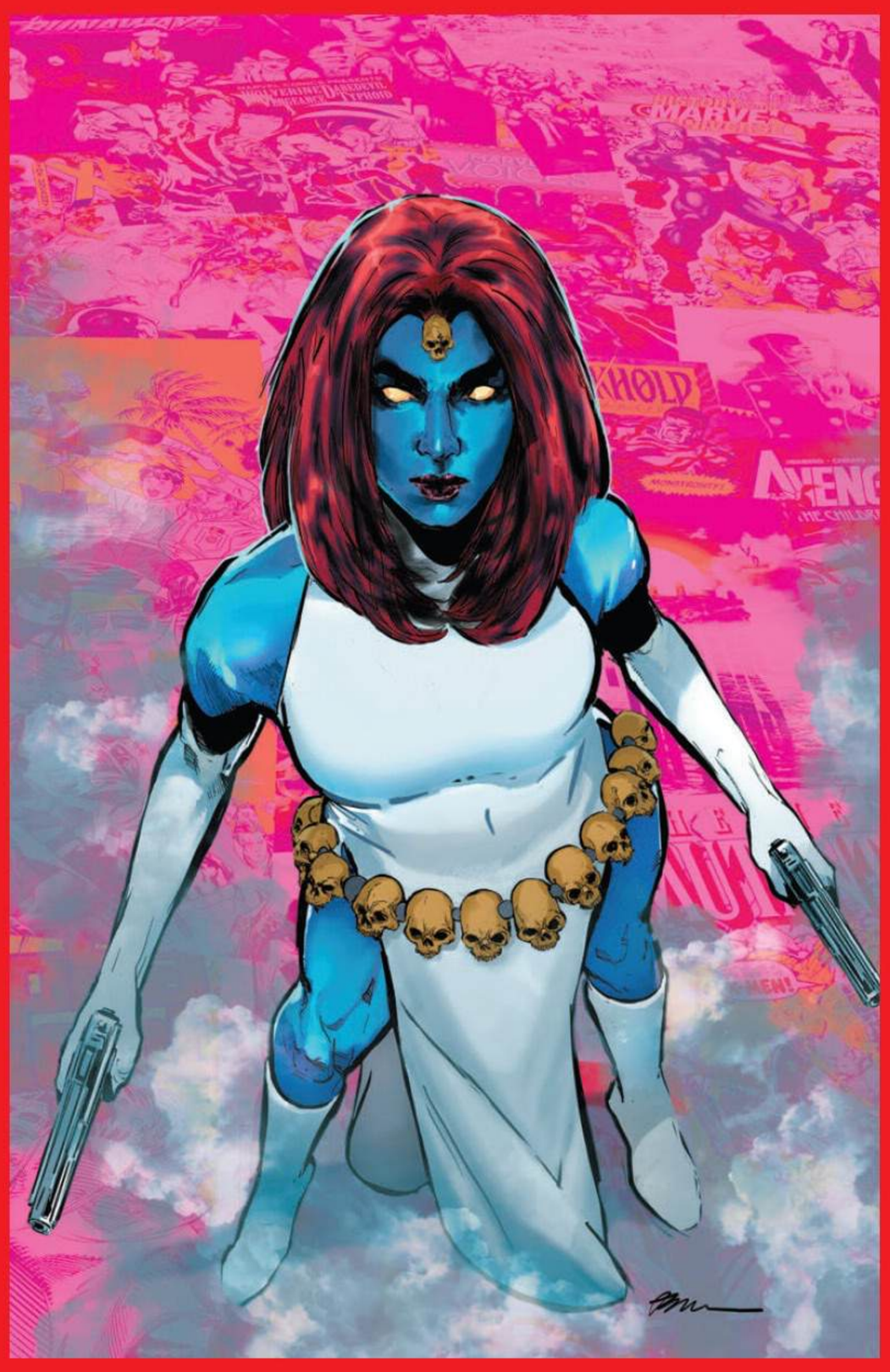
**X-Men #18 Variant** by Peach Momoko

**X-Men #19 Women's History Month Variant** by Jen Bartel

**X-Men #20 Variant** by Mike del Mundo




**X-Men #21 Jean Grey Design Variant** by Russell Dauterman



**X-Men #21 Pride Month Variant**
by Phil Jimenez & Marte Gracia

**X-Men #21 Spider-Man Villains Variant**
by Ema Lupacchino & David Curiel

**X-Men #21 Character Design Variant**
by Lucas Werneck

**X-Men #21 Connecting Variant**

by Russell Dauterman
& Matthew Wilson

**Giant-Size X-Men: Jean Grey and Emma Frost Variant**

by Iban Coello
& Rachelle Rosenberg

**Giant-Size X-Men: Jean Grey and Emma Frost Variant** by Gerald Parel

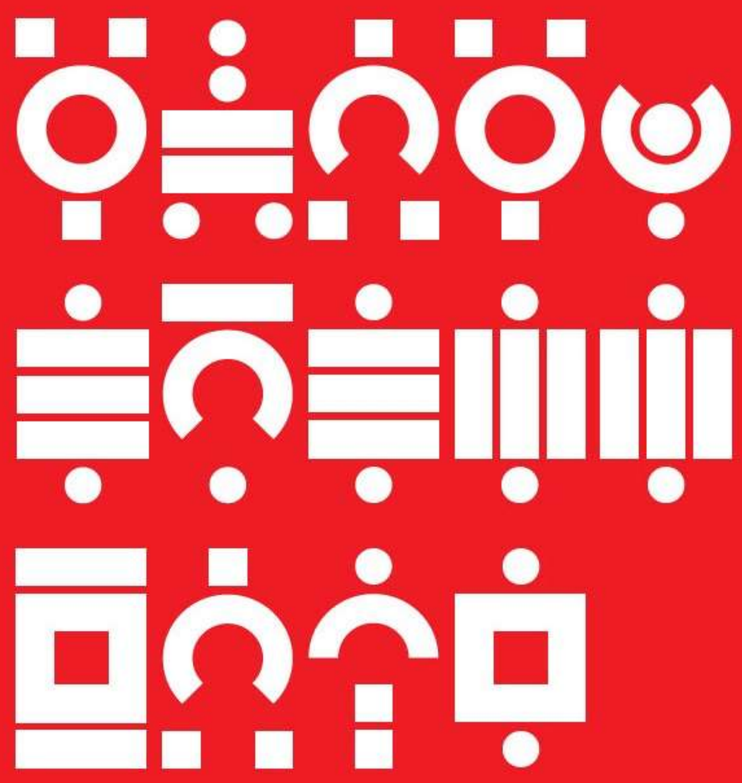
**Giant-Size X-Men: Nightcrawler Variant** by Ben Caldwell

**Giant-Size X-Men: Magneto Variant** by Esad Ribić

**Giant-Size X-Men: Fantomex Variant** by E.M. Gist

**Giant-Size X-Men: Storm Variant** by Jen Bartel

**"I will never stop fighting for what I believe in."**
**— Cyclops**



With *House of X* and *Powers of X*, Jonathan Hickman ushered in an era of hope for mutantkind. Now, their island nation makes its presence felt on the world around them — and beyond. But as their influence grows, so do the threats they face — both new and terrifyingly familiar. From the far reaches of space to the edge of tomorrow, the visionary Hickman continues his greatest feat of world-building yet in a run like no other!

**Collecting:**
X-Men (2019) #1–12 & #16–21
Giant-Size X-Men:
- Jean Grey & Emma Frost (2020) #1
- Nightcrawler (2020) #1
- Magneto (2020) #1
- Fantomex (2020) #1
- Storm (2020) #1

**By:**
Jonathan Hickman, Leinil Francis Yu, R.B. Silva, Matteo Buffagni, Mahmud Asrar, Phil Noto, Brett Booth, Francesco Mobili, Russell Dauterman, Alan Davis, Ramón K. Pérez, Rod Reis, Nick Dragotta, Lucas Werneck, Sara Pichelli, Gerry Alanguilan, Adelso Corona, Sunny Gho, Rainier Beredo, Marte Gracia, Matthew Wilson, Carlos Lopez, David Curiel, Frank Martin and Nolan Woodard

T+

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